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# **Bengal Terrorism & The Marxist Left**

**Aspects of Regional Nationalism in India,  
1905-1942**

**DAVID M. LAUSHEY**



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*Dedicated to my father,  
Clyde Shaw Laushey,  
who died while this  
work was in progress,  
and to my mother,  
Blanche O'Kennon Laushey*



## PREFACE

An important feature of West Bengal politics in the years immediately following independence was the proliferation of small, independent leftist parties. Virtually all of these parties drew some or all of their membership from the terrorist groups first organised early in the twentieth century. This fact raises the questions how and why these conversions from terrorism to some form of leftism took place. In their memoirs and in interviews with the author, former terrorists have generally credited the intellectual appeal of Marxism with motivating their conversions. But while intellectual attraction was important, other factors perhaps had equal or greater influence. A review of the background of this political transformation should bring these factors to light and provide new insights into the nature of the terrorist and Marxist aspects of Bengali nationalism.

This study seeks to assess the relative importance of both the terrorist movement and the terrorist conversion to Marxism in the overall nationalist struggle. It seeks more specifically to explain the process by which many members of the militantly Hindu terrorist organizations adopted a new and atheistic Marxist ideology. And finally it seeks to explain why these terrorists-turned-Marxists did not form into a single revolutionary party of the left but formed a variety of weak and impotent rival parties.

Before World War II, there were four serious outbreaks of terrorism in Bengal, each associated with an important episode in the county-wide nationalist movement. Although these outbreaks were markedly different from one another, each also displayed a similar pattern of development. An outbreak characteristically began with the formation or reorganization of parties determined to attack the British *raj* in India by violent means. Overt terrorist activity would follow when some event—the Partition of Bengal, World War I, the Gandhi-led Non-Cooperation Movement in the early 1920's, or the Civil Disobedience Movement in the early 1930's—precipitated conditions of popular agitation. The British responded to each of these outbreaks with special legislation, preventive arrests, and detentions, effectively

ending open activity, but the terrorists in jail and in detention camps planned and reorganized for the next outbreak when some new event in the nation-wide anti-imperialist struggle would provide the opportunity. It is therefore evident that terrorism was an expression of Bengali nationalism which cannot be considered outside of the context of the larger all-India nationalist movement.

The terrorist movement in Bengal prior to 1934 and the leftist groups that emerged from it were both characterized by disunity. The small leftist parties could not work together any more than rival terrorist parties had been able to cooperate. The persistence of disunity in both movements suggests that ideology, either terrorist or Marxist, was inadequate as a basis for cooperation among the rival groups.

Both the terrorist movement and the subsequent leftist movement drew their primary support and membership from youthful Bengali students. Of course, the youth who joined the terrorist movement in the 1920's belonged to a later generation than those who joined in the 1905 period. In fact, as they grew older, the terrorist leaders of the first generation became much less eager to institute dangerous acts of violence. The control of the parties by these increasingly cautious elders was therefore challenged by the youths who joined the terrorist movement in the 1920's. This gap between the generations of terrorists is seen in this study as an important factor in explaining why the younger terrorists turned toward Marxism in the late 1920's and early 1930's. The younger terrorists were eager for action, but they had no clear conception of how to proceed. Indeed, they had no commonly defined conception of their goal other than the negative one of ridding India of British control. The militant Hindu ideology of the early terrorist movement had become considerably watered down; in addition, it had little appeal to the new recruits. On the other hand, the inspiration of the Russian revolution, the perceived success of the new Russian Communist government in economic development of the country, the militant anti-imperialism of Marxism, and the mere novelty of the new ideology, all combined to attract many terrorists to Marxism. In addition to filling the ideological void and providing a new locus for enthusiastic loyalty, adoption of

this new ideology justified the younger terrorists' revolt against their party elders.

While a partial breakdown of group solidarity permitted Marxism to gain adherents among the younger members, it was, paradoxically, the persistence of group loyalty which prevented the terrorists who converted to Marxism from creating a single revolutionary Marxist political party. Divisions between the leftist parties after the conversion to Marxism tended to follow the lines of division between the terrorist parties prior to the conversion to Marxism.

Probably not more than half of the terrorists shifted to the Marxist left. The remainder joined Congress or dropped out of nationalist politics. In any case, the old terrorist parties were dissolved in the late 1930's. Those who did convert to Marxism either organized into new leftist political parties of their own, or they joined the CPI or one of the other leftist parties which had come into existence in the 1930's.

A chart has been provided in the Appendix to illustrate in a concise form the evolution, development, and conversion to Marxism of the various parties of Bengal from their terrorist beginnings. While this study focuses primarily on Bengal during the 1920's and 1930's, the pre-1920 terrorist movement has been summarized to provide essential background material, and some attention has been devoted to terrorism in other parts of India.

The primary sources used in this study are : (1) the files of the Home Department, Political Section, of the Government of India, housed in the National Archives in New Delhi ; (2) published Government reports found primarily in the National Library and the West Bengal Secretariat Library, both in Calcutta ; (3) memoirs and other accounts of the terrorists and Marxists published in English and translations of those published in Bengali and Hindi ; (4) published literature of the various leftist political parties ; and finally, (5) interviews with both leaders and rank and file members of the terrorist and Marxist groups.

This monograph was originally undertaken as a Ph.D. dissertation in history at the University of Virginia under the supervision of Professor Walter Hauser. Research was carried out in Calcutta and New Delhi during 1964-1965 under a grant from



the American Institute of Indian Studies. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are mine alone and do not in any way represent the Institute. I desire, however, to thank the Institute for financial support and its officers and staff, both in the United States and in India, for valuable advice and for other assistance which made this study possible. I also wish to express my appreciation to the numerous Indian revolutionaries and leftists (listed in the Bibliography) who gave freely of their time for interviews. The staffs of the National Archives in New Delhi, the National Library in Calcutta, and the West Bengal Secretariat Library in Calcutta gave every possible cooperation.

A special word of thanks is due to several individuals in India for their unusually large contribution to this study, namely, Tridib Kumar Ghosh, who located and translated Bengali materials into English, and who provided equally valuable assistance through his personal knowledge and interest in the subject and through his arranging of most of the interviews; Kali Charan Ghosh and his son, Sibabrata, who gave freely of their time and effort in talks with me and in arranging interviews; and Samaren Roy, who in addition to his personal knowledge of the subject, helped me make important contacts in Calcutta.

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July, 1973  
Atlanta, Georgia

DAVID M. LAUSHEY

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## KEY TO ABBREVIATED REFERENCES

Home Political	Government of India, Home Department, Political Section, National Archives, New Delhi.
<i>India and Communism</i>	Government of India, Home Department, Intelligence Bureau, <i>India and Communism</i> ; revised edition (Simla : Government of India Press, 1935).
"Note by the Secretary of State"	"A Note by the Secretary of State for India," <i>Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms (Session 1933-34)</i> (London : His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1934), Volume II (records).
Rowlatt Report	<i>Sedition Committee, 1918, Report</i> (Calcutta : Bengal Secretariat Press, 1918).



## CHAPTER I

### THE FIRST TWO OUTBREAKS OF TERRORISM

The terrorist movement in India had deep roots only in Bengal. Wherever it broke out in other provinces, it was quickly suppressed through ordinary criminal procedures. Only in Bengal did the movement have organizational continuity and popular appeal and support. Terrorism, however, got its start in Bombay Presidency. The Bombay outbreak is interesting, for it displayed a pattern which the subsequent outbreaks in Bengal also manifested.

In 1897 there was an epidemic of plague in Poona of such serious proportions that the Government adopted severe measures to deal with it, including house-to-house inspections and forced evacuations of suspected plague-infested houses. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, one of the most important of the Congress "extremists," used this opportunity to stir up nationalist resentment against the Government by writing inflammatory articles in the pages of his newspaper, *Kesari*.

Tilak's writings had particular appeal to members of the Chapekar Association, a group founded about 1895 by two brothers, Damodar and Balkrishna Chapekar, for physical and military training and for the defense of Hinduism. On June 22, 1897, Damodar Chapekar murdered the Plague Commissioner, Mr. Rand, and a subordinate officer, Lieutenant Ayerst. The murderer was arrested, tried, and executed, but members of the association subsequently made two unsuccessful attempts on the life of a police officer in Poona who had taken part in the investigation. They succeeded in murdering two brothers who had given information leading to the arrest of Damodar. As a consequence of this second round of terror, four members of the association were executed and another sentenced to a long prison term. Tilak was tried, convicted, and imprisoned for sedition. These arrests and convictions brought an end to open violence in Poona, although inflammatory writings continued in the vernacular press.<sup>1</sup>

The essential features of this outbreak of terrorism in Bom-

bay, later repeated in Bengal, are as follows : an organization combining a militant defense of Hinduism with physical exercise becomes engaged in terrorist activity when the Government takes an unpopular administrative action or when there is some other stimulus to a condition of popular excitement. The terrorist association is stimulated to action especially by inflammatory writings in the vernacular nationalist press. The initial terrorist outrage and resulting investigation and trial are followed by a series of other attacks directed against fellow Indians, especially police officers, informants, or witnesses involved in the case. In Bombay, normal criminal procedures were adequate to bring an end to the terrorist movement. But in Bengal special powers of arrest and trial became necessary to suppress the uprisings on four different occasions.

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF THE TERRORIST MOVEMENT IN BENGAL

In Bengal, the partition of the province in 1905 served as the spark to ignite the terrorist movement. The genesis of the terrorist parties which first sprang to life after 1905 can be traced to small, non-terrorist youth clubs originally devoted to the three-fold aims of physical, mental, and moral development of Indian youth. In Bengal, these clubs combined a militant Shakti Hinduism with physical exercises and a careful study of European and Indian nationalist and revolutionary literature. Apparently a number of these clubs had been organized in Bengal in the 1890's and early 1900's. The physical cultivation aspects of these clubs were partly motivated by the desire to rid Bengalis of the notion that they were a "non-martial race," an idea prevalent among the British after the Mutiny of 1857. In part, too, this emphasis on physical cultivation and forceful opposition to political authority developed from the ideas of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee as expressed in his novel, *Anandamath*. This novel, published in 1882, dealt with an order of Sannyasins (Hindu monks) who took to arms in the late eighteenth century against their Muslim rulers. The novel thus described a resort to violence among religious men for political purposes. The terrorists of Bengal adopted a similar strategy aimed at the British. *Anandamath* contained a song, "Bande Mataram" (Hail to the Mother), which became an important

element in the ritual of Bengali nationalism from the time of the Partition onward. The title "Bande Mataram" was used as a nationalist cheer and also became the title of a nationalist newspaper.

The influence of Swami Vivekananda was also pervasive among members of these youth clubs. Through his lecture tours in the United States, Europe, and India, Vivekananda had re-instilled in Hindus a pride in their own religion. He urged them to be strong, to develop themselves spiritually through Vedantism and intellectually through education. In a lecture in Madras in 1897 he laid particular emphasis on physical strength :

First of all, our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong my young friends; that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita."

Believing that every man had god within him, Vivekananda argued that it was every man's duty to work to develop the tremendous potential power within himself and help other men to the same realization. This implied social service work for the physical, intellectual, spiritual, and even economic upliftment of the masses of India. Social service work did become an important element among many of those inspired by Vivekananda's teachings, including members of the youth clubs and later some of the terrorist organizations.

The membership of the youth clubs, and of the subsequent terrorist parties, was drawn from among the dominant elite group of Bengali society known as the *bhadralok*. The *bhadralok* may have constituted only three to four per cent of the population of Bengal, but by virtue of their education they commanded the most important positions open to Indians in the government and they dominated the professions. Although membership in this privileged group depended more on education and occupation than birth, the great majority of *bhadralok* were drawn from the three top castes of Bengal, namely, Brahmin, Kayastha, and Baidya. Professor J. H. Broomfield has characterized the *bhadralok* as

a socially privileged and consciously superior group, economically dependent upon landed rents and professional and clerical employment; keeping its distance from the masses by its acceptance of high-caste proscriptions and its



command of education; sharing a pride in its language, its literate culture, and its history; and maintaining its communal integration through a fairly complex institutional structure . . . .<sup>1</sup>

Of course most *bhadraloks* did not become terrorists. Intellectually many of them abhorred violence, but ironically, many of them could not bring themselves to criticize openly those among them who did resort to violence.

According to statistics given in the *Rowlatt Report*, of the 186 persons convicted of revolutionary crimes or killed in the commission of such crimes in the period 1907 to 1917, 82 per cent were between the ages of 16 and 30, and 89 per cent were Brahmin, Kayastha, or Baidya; 45 per cent were listed as students or teachers.<sup>1</sup> The characteristics of youth and English education are emphasized in the following statement of the Sedition Committee :

Abundant evidence has compelled us to the conclusion that the secondary English schools, and in a less degree the colleges, of Bengal have been regarded by the revolutionaries as their most fruitful recruiting centres.<sup>2</sup>

*Bhadralok* status and youth were thus important characteristics of the members of these physical culture clubs, which were soon to become terrorist organizations.

Because a large number of wrestling and boxing clubs, literary societies, and other small groups were apparently founded around the turn of the century, it is difficult to pinpoint the precise date of origin of the Anushilan Samiti, the first major terrorist party in Bengal. Gopal Halder, the Indian author who has produced perhaps the best short interpretative essay on the terrorist movement, indicated that a group by the name of Anushilan Samiti was founded as early as 1897.<sup>3</sup> According to another Indian account, however, the Anushilan Samiti was founded about 1900-1901 by Satish Chandra Bose, a young student at General Assembly College in Calcutta. Subsequently, in 1902, Pramathanath Mitra, a practicing lawyer, became interested in the work of Bose and took over leadership of the Samiti.<sup>4</sup> As far as the British were concerned, the Anushilan Samiti grew out of the organizational efforts of the brothers, Aurobindo and Barindra Ghosh. The Ghosh brothers were the sons of Dr. K. D. Ghosh, a medical officer in the British Government. Aurobindo

had been educated entirely in England and Barindra had been born there. Failing to gain entrance into the Indian Civil Service because he could not pass the riding test, Aurobindo entered governmental service in the princely state of Baroda, eventually becoming Vice Principal of Baroda College. Barindra lived for a time with his brother in Baroda, but in 1902 he came to Calcutta specifically for the purpose of organizing a revolutionary movement. He established contact with several of the existing physical culture associations, and apparently he was responsible for founding several others. But he failed to generate any revolutionary sentiment. In the words of Charles Tegart, subsequently Commissioner of Police in Calcutta :

The cold reception accorded to Barin on his first tour in Bengal is not surprising. The youths to whom he preached belonged to a non-martial race. They had long lived in peace and had no reason to believe that they were under the heel of a tyrannical despotism which should be attacked or could be overthrown with bombs and revolvers. This was not a suitable atmosphere in which to preach wholesale murder. Something was required to rouse the people.<sup>a</sup>

Several events in the period 1904-1905 provided the necessary emotional stir. One of these was the pan-Asian pride generated by the victory of the small, Asian Japanese over the large, European Russians in their war of 1904-1905. A second event, and by far the more important, was the 1905 Partition of Bengal. Conceived by the Government strictly as a move to improve administration in the unwieldy province of seventy-eight million people, the Partition was regarded by the Bengali Hindus as an invidious attempt to divide their motherland and simultaneously gave the Bengali Muslims a majority in the newly created eastern province.

When Barindra Ghosh returned to Bengal and renewed his organizational efforts in 1904-1905,

he found the Province in the grip of an agitation of unparalleled bitterness. Bengal, a motherland once rich and famous, had been dismembered despite the protests of her children. Bengali acceptance of the insult was contrasted with the brilliant valour shown by Japan against one of the proudest of European nations. Had Bengalis no religion, no patriotism? In such a favourable atmosphere Barin renewed

his efforts with marked determination and laid the foundations of the terrorist societies, based on perverted religion and equally perverted patriotism. . . .<sup>9</sup>

Regardless when the original organization was first founded, the Anushilan Samiti became a terrorist organization only in 1905 under the combined efforts of Pramathanath Mitra and Barindra and Aurobindo Ghosh. Evidence of this conversion to terrorism came in 1906 when minor acts of dacoity (gang robbery) began and some assassinations of public officials were attempted. In March 1906, members of the Samiti began publishing a Bengali weekly, *Jugantar* (New Age), which openly advocated revolution and acts of terror. Branches of the Samiti quickly sprang up in various parts of Bengal, particularly in East Bengal, from headquarters in Dacca under the leadership of Pulin Bhari Das.

The event which first caused the Government serious alarm occurred in April 1908, when two English ladies, a Mrs. Kennedy and her daughter, were mistakenly killed in a bombing attempt on the District Judge of Muzaffarpur in Bihar. This bombing was carried out by Prafulla Chaki, who committed suicide on the point of arrest, and Khudiram Bose, who was captured, tried, and executed. In the course of the investigation which followed the Muzaffarpur bombing, the police discovered a bomb factory in Maniktolla garden in Calcutta. A connection was established between the Maniktolla factory and the Anushilan group of Barindra Ghosh, and thirty-seven persons were consequently arrested and brought to trial in the so-called Alipur Conspiracy Case.

Both during and after the Alipur trial, a series of other terrorist outrages were committed against Indian officials and witnesses involved in the case. In fact, one of the accused, Naren Gossain, who turned state's witness, was murdered inside Presidency Jail in Alipur. These obstructions to normal judicial procedure made the Government realize very early that the terrorist movement could not be dealt with under ordinary criminal law, and thus from Partition onward, the British enacted a series of temporary ordinances and laws which gave either the central or the provincial Government special powers, principally the power to arrest and detain suspected terrorists without trial and to try terrorists by special tribunals without jury.<sup>10</sup> One of the

earliest of these special laws was the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 which additionally gave the Governor General power to declare certain associations illegal. Under this law, the Dacca Anushilan Samiti and several other Samitis were outlawed.

Although the Government was inclined to refer to all terrorists in Bengal as members of one or at most two conspiratorial revolutionary parties, it is evident that the movement was divided into many smaller groups with varying degrees of independence from each other. There had been perhaps some degree of centralization of these groups from 1905 to about 1907 during which time Pramathanath Mitra, Barindra Ghosh, and Pulin Das were all working together. But in 1907 a group led by Barindranath split off because of Mitra's reluctance to initiate terrorist "actions," especially dacoities for the purposes of obtaining operating funds.<sup>11</sup> The Dacca Samiti under Pulin Das came to operate independently of the Calcutta group; but within East Bengal, Das had relatively centralized control over the several hundred branches of the Samiti then in existence. In West Bengal the movement was quite amorphous and decentralized. Gopal Halder has suggested one reason why :

Such Samities or secret revolutionary groups were by no means few. The Swadeshi movement had encouraged the formation of such local groups and each of them in its turn had its branches. The aim and object or the method and technique were almost similar, but the counsels and loyalties of each were its own. For secret societies have to work in narrow grooves and cannot risk their very existence in the name of revolutionary united front.<sup>12</sup>

However, the Calcutta terrorists did establish contact with the many other small local groups of West Bengal and thus created a loose terrorist confederation.

After the Alipur trial, the British came to regard the Anushilan Samiti as primarily an East Bengal organization,<sup>13</sup> and perhaps for want of any other name, began to refer to the terrorists of West Bengal by the name of the revolutionary journal, *Jugantar*. Subsequently many of the small, independent groups in West Bengal adopted the name "Jugantar" and thereby brought a new party into being. But it is difficult to determine just when this actually occurred. Gopal Halder stated that the Government first used the term "Jugantar" to designate a group

of terrorists under the leadership of Jatindranath Mukherjee who were brought to trial in the Howrah Conspiracy Case in 1910. According to Halder, "the authorities gave a name perhaps to a thing which was going to be a reality soon."<sup>11</sup> But Halder did not venture the precise date when Jugantar did become a reality. Professor Leonard A. Gordon, who has studied the matter closely, suggested that Jugantar as such did not come into being until late 1914 or early 1915.<sup>12</sup> This would mean that it was only in connection with activities during World War I that Jugantar emerged as a distinct group.

In any case, regardless of its precise date of founding, Jugantar remained for the rest of its existence a rather loose federation of local groups in contrast to the more tightly organized Anushilan Samiti in East Bengal. The terrorist movement in Bengal thus became and remained divided into two major parties, at times able to cooperate, but more often pursuing independent activities, sometimes in competition with each other. Significantly, this division into rival groups persisted even after many of the terrorists had converted to Marxism.

The process of the federation of smaller independent groups into the larger Jugantar party is illustrated by the development of the Atmonnati Samiti (Soul Developing Society). The Atmonnati Samiti was one of the literary and physical culture societies founded as early as 1897.<sup>13</sup> Like the Anushilan Samiti, the Atmonnati Samiti only became a well-organized group after the announcement of the proposed Partition of Bengal,<sup>14</sup> especially after Bepin Ganguly and Anukul Mukherjee took over leadership of the group in about 1902. Some members, it seems, were involved in the work of both the Atmonnati Samiti and the Anushilan Samiti. At least one member of the Atmonnati Samiti, Indranath Nandi, was put on trial with the Anushilan terrorists in the Alipur Case.<sup>15</sup> It has been suggested that after the Anushilan Samiti was declared illegal and was consequently forced underground, the Atmonnati Samiti carried on as the open propaganda front of the terrorist party.<sup>16</sup> However, the Atmonnati Samiti itself claimed credit for carrying out acts of terror as well, including the murder of the Indian police officer who attempted to arrest Prafulla Chaki, murder of a terrorist who turned traitor, and the famous robbery of the Rodda and Company.<sup>17</sup> By the time the Rodda robbery occurred, however, the Atmonnati Samiti

had been virtually incorporated as one of the sub-groups in the Jugantar federation which was then under the leadership of Jatin Mukherjee.<sup>21</sup>

The peculiar political organization of Jugantar has been penetratingly analysed by Leonard A. Gordon. The basic political unit in Bengal was the *dal*, a small intimate group organized around a single leader known as the *dada* (elder brother). The relationship of the *dal* member to his *dada* was very personal and intense, demanding unquestioning loyalty and obedience to the *dada*. It resembled the relationship between a Hindu religious teacher and his disciple. Because of its personal and intimate nature, the *dal* would necessarily be confined to a relatively restricted geographic locality, and the *dal* would be referred to either by the name of its locality or the name of its leader. Individual *dals* undoubtedly made their separate plans and carried out individual acts of terror, as the long lists of isolated outrages in the *Rowlatt Report* clearly make manifest. But because of their small size and limited geographic extent, individual *dals* could not carry out major terrorist "actions." Therefore alliances of *dals* were created, focused on a central headquarters, but with varying degrees of cohesion. Professor Gordon considered the Dacca Anushilan Samiti with its many branches and the Calcutta Jugantar with its affiliated groups to be examples of such alliances.<sup>22</sup>

The *Rowlatt Report* lists the long series of terrorist outrages which occurred from 1906 through 1917. Primarily these were dacoities, but some involved murder of Indian officials. It is perhaps significant that although a few attempts were made on the lives of English officials, the mistaken bombing of the Kennedys resulted in the only English fatalities during the period in Bengal.<sup>23</sup> It is impossible to find any coherent, consistent planning behind these outrages, a fact easy to understand in view of the decentralized nature of the movement. In fact, it is difficult to believe that all of them were carried out in the name of Indian independence. The *Rowlatt Report* does not give sufficient data about these outrages to rule out the possibility that some were committed by ordinary criminals. The *Rowlatt Report* ended with the recommendation that the Government be given special powers of arrest and detention without trial. It is possible that in order to justify these repressive measures, the

Rowlatt Committee over-emphasized the gravity of the terrorist situation by not carefully discriminating between acts of common criminals and acts of the revolutionary nationalists.

Without doubt the most spectacular terrorist act of the pre-World War I period was the bombing attempt on the life of Governor General Hardinge as he rode into Delhi to inaugurate the new capital city, on December 23, 1912. The anti-Partition agitation in Bengal had resulted in the Government's decision to reunify the two halves of the province, but at the same time the capital of British India was moved from Calcutta to Delhi. The bombing attempt, in which Hardinge was injured and an attendant killed, was carried out by a group of North Indian terrorists who had very close connections with the Bengal revolutionaries. In fact the group was led by the famous Bengali revolutionary, Rash Behari Bose. The activities of these North Indian terrorists are related more fully in later chapters as well as in the following section dealing with revolutionary activities during World War I.

#### WORLD WAR I AND THE SECOND OUTBREAK OF TERRORISM

England's participation in World War I provided the Bengali terrorists with the opportunity to coalesce into a somewhat united movement. Jugantar came into being as a loose federation but with a reasonably clear and well-planned course of action. And as Jugantar was emerging in West Bengal, a measure of cooperation was worked out between Jugantar and the predominantly East Bengal Anushilan Samiti for the duration of the war. Not only were the revolutionaries in Bengal reasonably united, but cooperation was achieved with various other small groups of terrorists which had sprung up in other parts of India and even outside of India.

As Gopal Halder explained it, the plan was as follows :

- (1) to seduce the Indian section of the [armed] forces posted in India and Burma; (2) to throw into the country the *Ghadr* element of the Punjabi revolutionaries who began to return to India for the purpose; (3) to effectively carry out the Indo-German plot for shipment of German arms for Indian revolutionaries, particularly those of Bengal; and
- (4) lastly, to co-ordinate activities of the societies in India.

to some extent, enlarge membership of each, train them, equip them, and necessarily finance them and defend them from all enemies by terrorist means as necessary.<sup>24</sup>

Except for the matter of coordination of the various terrorist groups, every attempt to implement aspects of this elaborate plan ended in failure for the terrorists. In part their failure may be explained by the diligence of the British who necessarily could tolerate no threats to the security of India while England itself was engaged in a life and death struggle in Europe.

A great deal of the terrorist activity during the World War period did not take place in Bengal itself, although Bengalis were involved in many phases of it. The most spectacular single action in the province during this period was the theft of fifty Mauser pistols and 46,000 rounds of ammunition from Rodda and Company in Calcutta on August 26, 1914, less than four weeks after the war in Europe broke out. The Sedition Committee considered this "an event of the greatest importance in development of revolutionary crime in Bengal."

The authorities have reliable information to show that 44 of these pistols were almost at once distributed to 9 different revolutionary groups in Bengal, and it is certain that the pistols so distributed were used in 54 cases of dacoity or murder or attempts at dacoity and murder subsequent to August 1914. It may indeed safely be said that few, if any revolutionary outrages have taken place in Bengal since August 1914, in which Mauser pistols stolen from Rodda & Co. have not been used. Owing to the activity of the police 31 of the stolen pistols have been recovered in various parts of Bengal.<sup>25</sup>

Although this passage would seem to imply a great deal of cooperation among the revolutionary groups, Gordon has presented evidence to show that there was considerable disagreement and bitterness among the revolutionaries over distributing the stolen weapons.<sup>26</sup> Thus, even the great opportunity for concerted action provided by the war was insufficient to maintain complete unity among the terrorists.

A better example of cooperative terrorist effort was provided by a group of non-Bengalis, the Ghadr revolutionaries, operating outside of India. The Ghadr Party was organized among Punjabi Sikh emigrants to the west coasts of the United States and



Canada especially through the efforts of one Har Dayal, an Oxford-educated Punjabi. Har Dayal came to the United States in 1911 and secured a position as lecturer on Indian philosophy at Stanford University. But he soon ran into difficulties and was dismissed for "over-playing his relationship to the University."<sup>27</sup> Har Dayal remained on the West Coast and undertook a series of speeches attacking both American discrimination against Asians and British imperialism in India. He sought to stir up enough emotional fervor to cause the Sikhs to return to the Punjab and bring about a violent revolution against the British. In early 1913 he started holding organizational meetings and collecting money; shortly thereafter the Pacific Coast Hindustani Association came into being. Headquarters were established at "Jugantar Ashram" in San Francisco and on November 1, 1913, the group began publishing a weekly newspaper, *Ghadr* (Mutiny), subsequently published in several Indian languages as well as English. The group came in time to be known by the name of the newspaper. The principal purpose of the newspaper was to arouse national pride in the Sikh immigrants by stressing the degradation suffered by Indians everywhere due to the British subjugation of their homeland, by emphasizing the glories of the Indian tradition and religion, and by publicizing the life stories of Indians who had fought and were fighting for India's independence. The paper continually urged the immigrants that the time had come for them to return to India, take up arms, and rebel against their British masters.

When the *Ghadr* newspapers began filtering back to India, the British Indian Government was naturally quite concerned that such material was being published in the United States, and they issued a strong protest through London.<sup>28</sup> As a result, Har Dayal was arrested on March 25, 1914, less than five months after beginning publication of the *Ghadr*. Released on bail, he immediately fled to Switzerland.<sup>29</sup> In Europe from 1914 to 1919, Har Dayal carried on his revolutionary nationalist program, first in Geneva where he founded a new propaganda paper, *Bande Mataram*, and later as a member of the Indian Independence Committee in Berlin. This committee, later important in the early Indian communist movement, was composed of a diverse group of exiled revolutionaries and was sponsored by the Germans during the war.<sup>30</sup> The principal aims of the committee were

to coordinate propaganda and to channel German aid to the Indian revolutionaries. For reasons that are not clear, Har Dayal was expelled from the committee shortly after joining, but the German Government continued to supply him with funds for carrying on his individual activities in Holland, Austria, and Sweden for the duration of the war.

After Har Dayal's flight from California, the Ghadr Party came under the control of Ram Chandra, who continued publication of the newspapers; but more importantly, he made contact with the Indian Independence Committee in Berlin and engaged in elaborate schemes for sending men, money, and arms to India. These fantastic schemes involved the diplomatic corps of Imperial Germany, including Franz Von Papen, then military attaché of the German Embassy in Washington, D. C. and later Chancellor of Germany. Negotiations were opened with the Chinese and Japanese Governments for the sale of arms, and ships were chartered to take the arms to India, all such projects being financed by Germany.

Jugantar, under the leadership of Jatin Mukherjee, took the initiative in implementing the arms plan from the Indian side. In India, the sequence of events began in January and February 1915 with two major dacoities in Calcutta which netted the revolutionaries Rs. 40,000, presumably to be used as operating funds for the venture. In April 1915, Narendranath Bhattacharya (later famous as "M. N. Roy") left India for Java to arrange for receiving a shipment of arms sailing from America. Also in April another of the Jugantar conspirators, Abanindranath Mukherjee (also later important as a communist organizer), left for Japan. Had it been successful the project would have climaxed in a large-scale revolutionary uprising in Bengal after the shipment of arms arrived. However, the plan met one failure after another. Bengal police became aware of the whole network of operations. Jatin Mukherjee was killed in a gun battle with the police in September. The ship, *Maverick*, which was supposed to bring the arms to India, failed to make rendezvous with another ship, the *Annie Larsen*, from which it was to receive the weapons. Naren Bhattacharya went back to Java in August 1915 when the revolutionaries learned that another ship with a smaller consignment of arms was being sent. In Batavia he discovered that the British had uncovered the whole scheme. After engaging

in still another abortive attempt in Japan and China to secure German aid in purchasing arms and shipping them overland into India, Bhattacharya crossed the Pacific to the United States to begin his career as "M. N. Roy."

While the attempts to import arms into India were total failures, the efforts of the Ghadr Party in urging Sikhs to return to India and to engage in revolutionary activity against the British bore more fruit, at least to the extent of getting a large number of immigrants to return. Once back in India, however, they were not successful in bringing about the revolution.

The influence of the Ghadr Party's propaganda is revealed in the strange affair of the *Komagata Maru*. In 1914, Gurdit Singh, a Sikh businessman in Singapore, chartered a Japanese ship, the *Komagata Maru*, to carry immigrant Punjabis then resident in East and Southeast Asia to Canada. Starting from Hong Kong, the ship made ports of call in China and Japan, picking up Sikh immigrants and *Ghadr* newspapers along the way. Singh must have known that very few of his passengers could meet Canadian immigration requirements and therefore most would not be permitted to enter Canada. It thus seems likely that Singh sought deliberately to create an incident which would arouse vigorous anti-British sentiment. One of the witnesses in a subsequent conspiracy trial reported that Singh had told his passengers that if they were not permitted to debark in Canada, they would return to India and start a revolt against the British.<sup>31</sup>

When the *Komagata Maru* arrived in Vancouver on May 23, 1914, there were 372 Indians aboard, all Sikhs except for twenty-one Punjabi Muslims. As might be expected, Canadian authorities permitted only the very few who could qualify to debark. Ultimately, after two months of stalling in port, the Canadian authorities had to force the ship to leave. En route westward, World War I broke out, and for some reason the British authorities at Hong Kong refused to allow any passengers from the *Komagata Maru* to debark. After returning to Japan for supplies, the ship sailed for India, much to the distress of many of its passengers who had no desire to return to their homeland. There was little they could do about it, however, and the ship docked at Budge-Budge on the Hooghly River in Bengal on September 29, 1914. To add to their consternation, the passen-

gers were not permitted freedom of movement once they got off the ship. On September 5, the British Government had issued the Ingress into India Ordinance to meet the emergency situation caused by the outbreak of war and especially aimed at restricting the movement of returning immigrants of Ghadr persuasion. Under this Ordinance, the Government of India could deny freedom of movement to any person entering the country if such action was deemed necessary for the security of the country. In order to prevent any incident from occurring in Bengal, which was already having its share of trouble with terrorists, the Government provided a special train to take the returned immigrants directly to the Punjab. But only seventy of the *Komugata Maru* passengers voluntarily boarded the train; the remainder attempted a march on Calcutta. The British met this threat with an armed force, and in the ensuing riot eighteen Sikhs were killed. A few fled and disappeared but most were arrested and held in detention until the following January.<sup>32</sup>

This so-called Budge-Budge riot was exactly the kind of situation the Ghadr movement needed to rally recruits to its cause. The incident provided great propaganda material for them, and they used it effectively, urging Sikhs abroad to return and join the imminent revolution. According to the *Rowlatt Report*, "numbers of emigrants listened to such calls and hastened back to India from Canada, the United States, the Philippines, Hong Kong and China."<sup>33</sup> The British attempted to screen the many returnees and to control their movement under terms of the Ingress into India Ordinance, but so many were returning that accurate discrimination was not possible. And by the middle of October, acts of revolutionary violence attributed to the returnees began to be reported from the Punjab. During October, November, and December of 1914, other ships arrived at Indian ports bringing returned immigrants. While accurate and complete statistics are not available, the Government of the Punjab reported that by March 16, 1915, some 3,125 immigrants had passed through the hands of the police, many being interned or restricted to their villages, but most being allowed complete freedom.<sup>34</sup> William Roy Smith estimated that for the first two years of the war, under the Ingress into India Ordinance, 400 were interned in jail, 2,500 were restricted to their villages, and 5,000 were released without any restrictions.<sup>35</sup> Thus

in a two year period, about 8,000 immigrants had returned to India from all parts of the world.

Elaborate plans were made by these returned immigrants for a general uprising in the Punjab, originally scheduled to take place on February 21, 1915. Because of suspicions that a leak had occurred, the date was moved up to February 19. But the British found out about this too, for a police agent, Kirpal Singh, had infiltrated the terrorist organization, won the confidence of the leaders, and informed the British of every move. Thus on February 19, instead of a general uprising, there were mass arrests which crushed the entire Ghadr organization. The terrorists taken into custody faced a series of conspiracy trials in Lahore and were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment.

In addition to the arrests and trials under ordinary criminal conspiracy law, and in addition to the Ingress into India Ordinance, in March 1915 the Defence of India Act was passed which gave the central Government power to set up special tribunals to try persons suspected of terrorist crimes. The Act also provided for preventive arrests and detentions. Action under this emergency legislation finally brought an end to revolutionary crime in Bengal and throughout northern India for the duration of the war. In all, 1,600 persons were dealt with under the Defence of India Act. The majority of such persons were required to live in their own homes and not to move without permission. By May 1919, all but 464 had been released from any kind of restraint.<sup>30</sup>

### THE ROWLATT ACT

The provisions of the Defence of India Act were to expire six months after the end of the war. While the war was still in progress questions were raised concerning future policy toward the revolutionary situation. The Government of Bengal was concerned that at the termination of the war, the expiration of the special powers of the Defence Act plus "the release of between 800 and 1,000 revolutionaries at the same time would turn Bengal into an anarchist play-ground."<sup>31</sup> Prompted by such fears, on December 10, 1917, the Governor General appointed a committee of five members under the presidency of Justice S.A T. Rowlatt, charging them with the responsibility

(1) to investigate and report on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement in India.

(2) to examine and consider the difficulties that have arisen in dealing with such conspiracies and to advise as to the legislation, if any, necessary to enable Government to deal effectively with them.<sup>38</sup>

This committee held hearings and examined documentary evidence for about four months and on April 15, 1918, published its report and recommendations, known officially as the *Sedition Committee 1918 Report*, but more commonly referred to as the *Rowlatt Report*. After surveying the entire course of revolutionary crime in India from the 1890's through 1917, the *Report* concluded with several recommendations for legislation to meet future outbreaks of terrorist crime. Among the most important of these were the recommendations to continue the provisions for trial by special tribunal without jury and without right of appeal and to provide the Government of India with prior authorization to invoke by notification special powers on two levels of severity depending on the gravity of the terrorist situation. At the first level was the power to restrict residence and to prohibit propagandizing activities of certain classes of persons, and at the second level to arrest, search, and detain without trial persons suspected of complicity in a terrorist conspiracy. These recommendations were enacted on March 21, 1919, as the Revolutionary and Anarchical Crimes Act, popularly known as the Rowlatt Act. The Act was a temporary measure only, having a statutory life of three years.

Passage of the Rowlatt Act provoked a storm of criticism among liberal Indian nationalists. Considering that the terrorist movement had already been quashed by the series of conspiracy trials and by preventive detention under the Defence of India Act, it might be suspected that other motives were operative on the Government of India. There is indeed some evidence to suggest that the British, even in 1919, were concerned over the possible threat of communism to the security of the British position in India. The Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, devoted a great deal of his attention to defending the Rowlatt Act in his speech to Commons inaugurating the

debate on the East India Revenue Accounts for 1919 and in the subsequent debate. At one point he commented :

There are dangers that justify this emergent and exceptional power at a period of the close of the War, with all the difficulties of peace, and when Bolshevism, even though its attractions are waning, is still a force to be reckoned with.<sup>39</sup>

And at another point, commenting on the reasons why the new Amir of Afghanistan had provoked war by attacking British territories, the Secretary of State said that the Amir's motives could be attributed

partly to the emissaries of that dark and murderous doctrine which fattens upon unrest, feeds on discontent, spreads disorder wherever it shows its head—Bolshevism, and the Bolshevik emissaries of Russia.<sup>40</sup>

Thus the passage of the Rowlatt Act may not have been prompted strictly by an objective evaluation of the threat of the terrorist movement, but by the more subjective evaluation of the threat to the British position in India that any kind of disorder was believed to pose when coupled with communist disturbances.

It is interesting that this connection between terrorism and Marxism should manifest itself in the minds of the British as early as 1919, for the real merger of the two movements did not occur until more than a decade later.

## CHAPTER II

### THE THIRD OUTBREAK, 1919-1925

#### THE GENERAL POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The passage of the Rowlatt Act in 1919 was undoubtedly a political blunder. The terrorist movement during World War I had been easily handled by preventive detention under the Defence of India Act. All of the principal terrorists were in jail by 1919, when the Act was passed, and the terrorist groups were thoroughly disorganized. The fact that the provisions of the Rowlatt Act were never implemented clearly indicates that the Act was unnecessary.

Unfortunately, the chief effect of the Act was to stir up bitter agitation among even the more moderate Indian nationalists,<sup>1</sup> and this happened just at the time the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were being considered. Gandhi, who up until this time had not taken a very active part in the nationalist movement, organized the Satyagraha Sabha and called an all-India *hartal* (general strike) for April 6, 1919, in protest against the Rowlatt Act.<sup>2</sup> The success of this *hartal* catapulted Gandhi into national prominence and ultimately into leadership of the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920-1922. Surendranath Banerjea later recorded in his memoirs that "the Rowlatt Act was the parent of the Non-Cooperation Movement."<sup>3</sup>

Here then was an important connection between the terrorists and the mainstream of the Indian nationalist movement. British over-response to the threat of terrorism solidified a wide spectrum of Indian opinion behind the leadership of Gandhi. This happened just at the time the British were taking a most important step in the devolution of political power to Indian hands.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were passed into law in December 1919, in partial fulfilment of the pledge made during World War I to bring Indians into increasing association with every phase of governmental administration, ultimately aiming at complete Indian self-government within the Empire. The



Reforms clearly separated the functions of the central government and the provincial governments and further divided the powers of the provincial governments into "transferred" subjects and "reserved" subjects. Under the system known as "dyarchy" the former subjects were to be administered by Indian ministers responsible to the provincial legislatures, while the latter were to remain under British officials responsible only to the governor. The legislative councils of the center and the provinces were enlarged and both were given popularly elected Indian majorities. To prevent a deadlock between the legislatures and the administration concerning the transferred subjects, the governors were given power to administer the transferred areas directly in the absence of a responsible Indian minister. Furthermore, the governors had the power to legislate by ordinances valid for six months and also to pass bills over the head of the popular assemblies if such bills were certified as necessary for the preservation of law and order in the provinces.

These latter provisions were the object of much criticism among nationalist leaders, who argued that no real devolution of power was being made to them. Numerous Congress leaders were unwilling even to give the Reforms a try. The defects in the Reforms Act itself constituted one motive for this attitude, but perhaps more important in explaining this attitude was an event that occurred in Amritsar, April 13, 1919, an event unprecedented in 150 years of British rule in India. Demonstrations against the Rowlatt Act had continued after Gandhi's *hartal* of April 6. In some places riots had occurred. At Amritsar a large group of people were meeting in an enclosed area known as Jallianwallah Bagh despite an order prohibiting such meetings. General Dyer marched a body of troops to the scene, and without warning ordered his troops to open fire. According to British estimates 379 persons were killed and more than 1,200 wounded, but Indian nationalist estimates of the killed ran as high as 1,000.

What is amazing in these circumstances is the moderation of the Indian protest that followed this tragedy. Although a considerable number of nationalists were shocked and now thoroughly disillusioned with British promises of good faith, a majority were willing to wait and see what action the British would take against those responsible for the Amritsar shooting.

In December 1919, Gandhi was able to work out a compromise with those who opposed the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms by which the door was left open for Congress participation in the reformed legislative councils. In less than a year, however, when it became apparent that no punitive action would be taken against those responsible for Amritsar, Gandhi shifted his position, Congress rejected the Reforms, and the first Non-Cooperation Movement was begun under Gandhi's leadership.

Gandhi called for all Indians to give up their British titles and honors and to boycott government functions, schools, courts, legislatures, elections, and foreign-made goods, especially cloth. Throughout all, the movement was to be kept non-violent. Under Gandhi's leadership, the nationalist movement attracted widespread mass support really for the first time. An additional measure of support was brought to the nationalist cause by the Khilafat Movement, in which Muslims supported Congress in protest against the treatment meted out to Turkey by the British after Turkey's defeat in World War I.

#### TERRORISTS IN THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

Most of the revolutionaries and political prisoners detained under the Defence of India Act during the war were released in early 1920 by virtue of a royal amnesty of December 23, 1919, granted simultaneously with the proclamation of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. However, rather than resume terrorist activities, most of the revolutionaries were almost immediately caught up in the Gandhi-led non-violent Non-Cooperation Movement. According to Gopal Haldar, Jugantar was considerably more willing to support the Non-Cooperation Movement than Anushilan, especially because of the persuasive influence of C. R. Das. Das, himself, did not approve of terrorism, but according to Bengal Intelligence, he at least connived with terrorism in return for the political support the terrorists gave him in Bengal Congress politics.<sup>4</sup> He was able to exercise some influence over Jugantar, at least until after the Non-Cooperation Movement was called off.

Anushilan, while not engaging in terrorist activities during the Non-Cooperation Movement, nevertheless did not give the Movement its support. In fact, Anushilan began publishing a

series of leaflets called the *Hak-Katha* especially to voice its opposition to Congress policy.<sup>5</sup>

During the Non-Cooperation Movement, many new and younger members were recruited to the revolutionary groups, especially among those who were leaving school at Gandhi's call, but no terrorist outrages were perpetrated. According to a later British Intelligence report, the terrorists joined the Movement specifically to reorganize their disrupted parties and to recruit new members from the ranks of the Non-Cooperation volunteers.<sup>6</sup> However, it seems more likely that the terrorists were, for the moment, sincerely interested in seeing what would result from Gandhi's novel tactics. In any case, while the Non-Cooperation Movement was in progress, 1920-1922, no major terrorist activities were planned.

Violence did occur, however, as the peaceful movement got out of control in several places and lost its non-violent character. After the particularly tragic Chauri Chaura incident in the United Provinces in which 22 policemen were burned to death, Gandhi called off the Movement. Gandhi's action here was criticized by nearly all of the top leaders of Congress. They argued that the entire nation-wide Movement should not be called off merely because of isolated instances of violence. The terrorists, as might be expected, were especially critical of the sudden ending of the Movement. Yet in spite of this massive opposition, Gandhi's view prevailed. The terrorists at this point were left in a mood of confusion, bitterness, and frustration, which would soon produce a demand for the immediate resumption of terrorist activities, especially by the new and younger members.

### THE ACTIVE PHASE OF TERRORISM

According to British Intelligence, the meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress at Chittagong in April 1922, shortly after the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement, provided the opportunity for a large number of terrorists to come together and plan for the resumption of terrorist activities.<sup>7</sup> Conditions for the renewal of overt actions were favourable for the terrorists at this time. Many of the restrictive laws passed since 1905 designed to curb terrorist activity had been repealed or allowed

to lapse in order to provide a more favourable atmosphere for the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, especially after the blunder of the Rowlatt Act. A royal amnesty for all political prisoners was granted on the same day that the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms became law. Also the Rowlatt Act and the Indian Press Act, as well as other special legislation, were repealed in 1922.

The new phase of terrorist activity was inaugurated by a fresh outpouring of propaganda in the Bengali press. The repeal of the Press Act of 1910 seemed to be the signal for this renewal of publishing activity. A rather large number of revolutionary nationalist newspapers and journals made their appearance, some of which remained in operation only a short while and some of which were published only intermittently.<sup>3</sup>

The Bengal Government considered that propaganda articles in these publications came just short of open sedition, but that the effect of the articles was clearly the same or worse, since the object was to arouse hatred and contempt against the British and to incite the readers to crimes of violence. The Government was especially concerned with four broad categories of writings :

(a) The familiar kind of article which denounces the economic oppression of the British in India and very often adds something about defending the chastity of mothers and sisters. This is intended to excite hatred. Articles of this class are very common. . . .

(b) Appeals, which are frequently poems in mystic language, which extol freedom and self-sacrifice. These are intended to excite religious emotion. . . .

(c) Articles which profess to give an historical account of the doings of old revolutionaries. Sometimes these relate the facts correctly, and at other times the persons and the actions are invented though the stories profess to be historical. The incidents are generally related without comment, but there are sometimes specifically laudatory remarks, and sometimes (for the sake of safety) cold condemnation of the acts with a reservation commending the motives. These articles are intended to show how effect may be given to the emotions excited by articles of the two classes mentioned above. . . .

(d) Articles which profess to deal in a detached and scien-

tific manner with various methods of the use of force, [for instance, how to make explosives].<sup>9</sup>

The Secretary of State for India called attention to the fact that the third category of articles, namely, the open praise of the old revolutionaries, was a new feature of nationalist propaganda which first began to appear after 1923.<sup>10</sup>

The Bengal Government concluded that the publication of these propaganda articles was an important part of the policy of the revolutionaries, that the articles were actually written by prominent revolutionaries, and that "these writings exercise now, as they did at the period of the early revolutionary movement, an extraordinary influence over the unbalanced minds of the students of Bengal."<sup>11</sup>

In spite of this outpouring of propaganda and in spite of the generally favourable conditions for the revival of open terrorist activity, the actual occurrence of terrorist outrages was not as great as might have been expected, certainly not as great as the Bengal Government later contended. The Anushilan Samiti was peculiarly inactive in Bengal, although it was responsible for the formation of a new organization, the Hindustan Republican Association in the United Provinces.<sup>12</sup> In fact, because of its inactivity, Anushilan had difficulty in keeping some of its younger members in line, and eventually it lost control of the Hindustan Republican Association. It was Jugantar, not Anushilan, which was responsible for major terrorist activity in Bengal between 1922 and 1924.

In the spring and summer of 1923, Jugantar carried out several dacoities which resulted altogether in five murders. Although seven members of Jugantar were brought to trial, no convictions were obtained. Bengal police later obtained information that a conspiracy was being planned, the principal object of which was the murder of police officers. They found, in fact, that the movement and residences of certain police were being watched, and the police in turn placed the watchers under surveillance.<sup>13</sup>

At the end of 1923, a branch of Jugantar in Chittagong led by Surya Sen robbed the Assam Bengal Railway office in Chittagong of Rs. 17,000. Although the police uncovered a store of foreign-made guns and ammunition near Chittagong, and although Surya Sen and two others were arrested and

brought to trial, the Government again was not able to obtain convictions. Subsequently, in May 1924, one of the investigating police officers in this case was assassinated by unknown assailants.<sup>14</sup>

Thus far, the victims of terrorist murder and dacoity had all been Indians, police and postal officials who worked for the Government. The event which caused the Government serious concern was the murder of a European in Calcutta in January 1924. In a case of mistaken identity, a British merchant, Mr. E. Day, was shot to death by Gopi Mohan Saha. The intended victim was Charles Tegart, the Commissioner of Police in Calcutta. This assassination was followed in March by the discovery of a well-equipped and well-stocked bomb factory in Calcutta, and in April by yet another attempt on the life of the Commissioner of Police in which a Mr. Bruce was shot at, again in mistake for Tegart.<sup>15</sup> Then in July the so-called "Red Bengal" propaganda leaflets made their appearance announcing the beginning of a campaign of assassination of police officers. Between July and October, five assassinations were actually attempted, although in each case the intended victims escaped unharmed.<sup>16</sup> The Bengal Government, by this time, was convinced that it was faced with a widespread terrorist conspiracy and was urging the enactment of special legislation similar to the Defence of India Act to deal with the situation.<sup>17</sup>

#### TERRORISTS IN CONGRESS AND THE CALCUTTA CORPORATION

But the revival of open terrorist violence was not the only cause for Government concern. From the beginning of the 1920's, the Bengal Government was faced with a totally new situation, a situation which grew directly out of the terrorist participation in the Non-Cooperation Movement and which required much more delicate handling than open violence. This was the increasing association of terrorists and former terrorists with the official Congress organization in Bengal.

It was only natural that, with open terrorist activity suspended during the Non-Cooperation Movement, many revolutionaries would gravitate into the Congress organization. By the time the Movement was called off in early 1922, terrorists had succeeded in gaining position of leadership on the executive

committees of many district Congress organizations, and were represented on the executive committee of the Bengal Congress and even the All-India Congress Committee.<sup>18</sup>

The split which occurred in the Bengal Congress as a result of disagreement over the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms gave the terrorists an even greater opportunity to extend their influence. While the Gandhi-ites, or "no-changers" were advocating total non-cooperation with the reformed legislative councils, C. R. Das was organizing the Swarajya Party among those Congressmen who thought the Reforms could only be wrecked by entering the councils and disrupting from within. The terrorists in Bengal, mostly of the Jugantar party, threw their support behind Das, thus enabling the Swarajists to win control over the Congress apparatus in Bengal. The terrorists held the balance of power. The connection between Swarajists and Jugantar became so close that in 1923 the police reported that "the headquarters of both parties in Calcutta were at one and the same place."<sup>19</sup> The police also claimed to have evidence that the terrorists were drawing their funds from the treasury of the Swarajya Party and hence were able to concentrate more on terrorism by murder and less on robbery of money.<sup>20</sup>

Probably even more significant was the association of terrorists, especially Jugantar, with the Calcutta Corporation. Ironically, this association was made possible by the efforts of Sir Surendranath Banerjea, a man who vigorously opposed the terrorists, Swarajists, and even "no-changers," and who gave wholehearted cooperation to the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Banerjea had left Congress in 1918 at the time the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was first published, and along with other moderates, had organized the All-India Liberal Federation, also referred to as the Moderate Party, pledged to work for the success of the reformed councils. Banerjea became one of the three ministers in charge of the transferred subjects in Bengal. As minister of Local Self-Government in the Bengal Provincial Government between 1921 and 1924, Banerjea introduced the Calcutta Municipal Act, which provided that four-fifths of the members of the Corporation Council would be popularly elected by tax-paying citizens of Calcutta. These elected representatives would in turn elect a Chief Executive Officer who would be in charge of all city administration, and a Mayor who would

also be Speaker of the Council. Banerjea was successful in getting this Act passed in 1923, and in March 1924 the first elections under a newly extended franchise were held. Much to the distress of Banerjea, the Swarajists won a majority of seats and promptly elected C. R. Das as the first Mayor. According to Banerjea, this was "the first crowning blunder of the new regime."<sup>21</sup> A young Bengali, then too little-known even to rate mention in Banerjea's memoirs, was chosen Chief Executive Officer. This young man was Subhas Chandra Bose, later to become one the most outstanding leaders in Bengal politics. Bengal Intelligence reported that after Das and Bose assumed power in the Corporation, many terrorists were given jobs in the city administration.<sup>22</sup> The Bengal Government could have no further doubt as to the extent of terrorist penetration of Congress after June 1924, when the Bengal Provincial Congress, meeting at Serajganj, passed a resolution praising the courage and self-sacrifice of Gopi Mohan Saha, the murderer of Mr. Day.<sup>23</sup>

Such a situation could not be tolerated for long. The Bengali press was full of nationalist propaganda; murders and dacoities had already occurred; the British were convinced that widespread assassination plots were being planned; a European had been killed; terrorists had infiltrated every level of the Congress organization in Bengal; terrorists were even employed by the Calcutta Corporation; and now the Bengal Congress appeared to be openly condoning terrorist activity in resolutions. Furthermore, the terrorists seemed to be no longer under the restraining influence of C. R. Das, at least after the summer of 1924;<sup>24</sup> and finally, Bengal police had evidence that agents of M. N. Roy were in contact with the Anushilan Samiti in Bengal and the Hindustan Republican Army in the United Provinces.<sup>25</sup>

#### BRITISH REPRESSION

As early as 1923 the Government of Bengal had appealed to the central Government of India for special legislation similar to the Defence of India Act to deal with this revival of terrorist activity. However, the Government of India had refused for the reasons.

(a) that the evil was localised in Bengal; (b) the overt



acts which could be shown to be due to the conspiracy were of a limited nature and the majority of the section responsible were under arrest; (c) that without a dangerous disclosure of the source of police information it could not be proved to the public that the situation justified so strong a measure; (d) that the inevitable criticism would prejudice elections under the new constitution, and the position of Government in other provinces.<sup>26</sup>

Apparently the Government at New Delhi wanted no repetition of such agitation as had followed the passage of the Rowlatt Act. However, toward the end of 1923, the Government of India did exercise its powers under Regulation III of 1818 to inter seventeen Bengali terrorists.

In July 1924, the Government of Bengal again appealed for special legislation, pointing out that Regulation III was inadequate for dealing with "a widespread conspiracy."<sup>27</sup> Regulation III authorized only the Government of India, not the provincial authorities, to impose preventive detention. The Government of Bengal considered it necessary to exercise this power itself without calling on the Government of India. By September 1924, the Government of Bengal was convinced that the situation had reached the crisis point and appealed to Delhi once again for special powers. With obvious concern to avoid a repetition of the Rowlatt Act agitation, the Government of India referred the question to London, where the Labour Ministry then in power concurred with the Government of Bengal that special powers were necessary. Therefore on October 25, the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance was promulgated, valid for six months, permitting the Government of Bengal to try cases involving terrorists before a tribunal without jury and without right of appeal and to arrest and detain suspects without trial. The fact that the decision to promulgate this Ordinance was made by the Labour Ministry caused Indian nationalists, who previously had considered the Labour Party as the friend of India, to become almost as distrustful of Labour as of the Conservatives.<sup>28</sup> Although Gandhi criticized the Ordinance, on the whole there was surprisingly little popular outcry against it, at least nothing on the order of the anti-Rowlatt agitation.<sup>29</sup>

The Bengal police acted the same day the Ordinance was promulgated, carrying out arrests on a large scale. Included in

this series of arrests was Subhas Chandra Bose, Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation, who was held without trial for the next two years, most of the time in Mandalay, Burma.<sup>30</sup> Since the Ordinance was valid for a six month period only, the Government of Bengal sought an extension of these emergency powers from the provincial legislature. The legislature, however, with an elected Indian majority, refused leave to introduce the bill, and therefore the measure had to be enacted by means of the certification power of the Governor. The Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1925, as this new measure was called, came into force on March 21 and was virtually the same as the Ordinance of the previous year, except that its provisions were to remain in force for five years. An amendment, certified on March 30, permitted detention of suspects outside of Bengal.

From 1924 until 1927, a total of 183 persons were imprisoned under the Ordinance and the Act. A few more were dealt with under Regulation III. The Government of India had been especially concerned that the schedule of persons against whom the Ordinance and the Act could be applied be very carefully defined in order to forestall the charge that these special provisions were directed against the Swarajya Party, not the terrorists. Since the connection between Swarajists and terrorists was so close in Bengal, however, it was inevitable that many Swarajists would be caught up in the arrests. In spite of the Government's precautions, it was just as inevitable that the charge would be made by the Swarajists that the Bengal Government was directing its wrath against the party and especially against the Swarajist administration of the Calcutta Corporation.<sup>31</sup> However, it was the Bengal Government's position that a large-scale revolutionary conspiracy was underway and therefore preventive arrests had to be made before it was too late. The Government of Bengal may have had legitimate cause for grievance with the Swarajya Party, but it is unlikely that it would resort to preventive detention to thwart the Party. The Swarajists won a plurality in the Bengal Legislative Assembly in the November 1923 elections and were thus in a strong position to attempt to carry out their avowed aim, namely, wrecking the legislative councils from within.<sup>32</sup> C. R. Das, as leader of the most numerous party in the legislature, was invited to become

a minister, but, consistent with the Swarajist goal of making the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms unworkable, he refused.

The most reasonable conclusion is that the Bengal Government did not aim the preventive arrests at the Swarajists, but rather, that the Government was sincerely concerned that it was facing a widespread terrorist uprising. It is true that this was an exaggerated fear, but in any case the preventive arrests were effective, despite some minor evidence to the contrary,<sup>33</sup> in bringing to an end this third outbreak of terrorist activity, at least in Bengal.

### THE HINDUSTAN REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION

Outside of Bengal a new movement, little affected by the emergency powers granted to the Government of Bengal, was developing. This was the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA), located primarily in the United Provinces. This organization is interesting for a number of reasons. First, aside from the Ghadr Party in the Punjab, it was the only other major revolutionary group in India with its primary center of activities outside of Bengal ; second, the HRA was closely connected with both the Ghadr Party and the Bengal Anushilan Samiti ; third, the HRA displayed considerable impatience with the relative inactivity of the two major revolutionary parties, especially Anushilan Samiti, and demanded more immediate violent action ; and finally, the HRA was among the first revolutionary groups, in India to be influenced by the Russian Revolution and Marxism. These last two points are particularly significant because they foreshadow developments that would characterize the entire Bengal terrorist movement after 1928.

Most of the revolutionary groups anywhere in India could be traced directly or indirectly to the influence of the Bengali terrorist movement. The British clearly recognized this fact.

Terrorism has its birth in Bengal, and where it has shown its head in other Provinces, it can almost invariably be traced to Bengali influences. It is at all events true to say that in no Province but Bengal is there that widespread and deeprooted terrorist mentality which is essential for its development. It is this which accounts for the fact that when terrorist conspiracies have existed elsewhere Govern-

ment has been able to deal more promptly and more effectively with them than in Bengal.<sup>34</sup>

The history of the HRA clearly confirms both the Bengali influence on the organization and the ease with which it could be suppressed by the British, for it was suppressed without recourse to emergency legislation such as had been necessary in Bengal. The HRA was founded in 1923 in Banaras, principally through the efforts of Sachindranath Sanyal of Banaras and Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee of Dacca. Chatterjee had joined the Dacca Anushilan Samiti in 1911 as a young man of sixteen. He was arrested during World War I and kept under detention until the royal amnesty. In 1923 he was deputed by the Dacca Anushilan Samiti to go to Banaras to work with Sanyal in reorganizing the revolutionary movement in the United Provinces.<sup>35</sup>

Sachindranath Sanyal had founded an Anushilan Samiti branch in Banaras as early as 1908. Rash Behari Bose, who had been involved in the assassination attempt on Hardinge, also had connections with this Banaras group as well as with the Ghadr terrorists in the Punjab. Thus there was a loose association of terrorists from Bengal to the Punjab through this link in the United Provinces. During the Government's general crack-down on terrorism during World War I, Bose fled to Japan, but Sanyal was arrested in June 1915 and subsequently was convicted and sentenced to transportation for life. He served this sentence in the Andaman Islands until his release by the royal amnesty. In 1923, Sanyal and Chatterjee reorganized the old terrorist groups in the United Provinces centered in Banaras, and this became the nucleus of the Hindustan Republican Association.<sup>36</sup>

The HRA took 'definite organizational shape in early October 1924 at a meeting held in Kanpur. Here the party took its official name.<sup>37</sup> A constitution was drawn up which proclaimed the object of the party to be the establishment of a Federated Republic of the United States of India by means of armed revolution. A central executive committee was established which was to be composed of members representing all the provinces of India. Decisions of the party were to be made by unanimous vote of the executive committee, and party discipline was to be enforced under penalty of death. The central organization had the responsibility of controlling and coordi-

nating provincial units of the party and of keeping contact with revolutionaries outside of India. Provincial units were to establish five functional divisions, namely, publicity, people's organizations, collection of money, collection of weapons, and foreign affairs.<sup>38</sup>

According to British Intelligence, in October 1924, there were branches of the party established in every province except Bihar, the Central Provinces, and Madras. There were twenty district branches in the United Provinces alone.<sup>39</sup> According to one Indian writer, membership of the North Indian units was made up of former Ghadr Party terrorists.<sup>40</sup>

One branch established in Calcutta was known to the police as the New Violence Party. According to Intelligence reports, this group was founded in 1925 after the mass arrests under the Ordinance and Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1925. Those Anushilan and Jugantar leaders who had escaped arrest were now unwilling to continue open activity, but a number of "younger hotheads" from both parties combined to form the New Violence Party in order to bring about an immediate resumption of terrorist activity.<sup>41</sup>

The major program of the HRA in the United Provinces, as outlined by Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee in October 1924, was as follows :

- (a) To have in each province a vernacular and an English newspaper with the primary object of criticising continuously the Criminal Investigation Department so as to gain the sympathy of every Indian citizen for the revolutionaries against the Criminal Investigation Department. As the Criminal Investigation Department cannot work without spies, it must be their aim to discover and to do away with them.
- (b) To collect funds and arms.
- (c) To send picked men abroad, chiefly to Germany and Russia, to study naval, military and aerial tactics.
- (d) To secure the support of Russia, financial and other, through M. N. Roy.<sup>42</sup>

Also revealing of the nature of activities which the HRA hoped to carry on are the following five resolutions passed at a meeting of the United Provinces Provincial Committee of the HRA held on October 3, 1924 :

- (a) To set up a campaign against Criminal Investigation Department activities.
- (b) To set up a campaign against repressive laws and measures.
- (c) To criticise Congress activities that hinder the work of the Association.
- (d) To preach social revolutionary ideas and communist principles.
- (e) To collect stories, episodes and other materials for publication.<sup>43</sup>

Although the initial impetus for founding the HRA had come from the Bengal Anushilan Samiti, it was not long before Sanyal and the Bengal leadership were in a serious quarrel. In the first place, Sanyal apparently had gone into hiding in early 1924 and had turned over leadership of the HRA to Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, without first securing permission from Norendra Sen, then head of the Anushilan Samiti. More important, however, was a difference of view between Norendra Sen and Sanyal concerning the proper policy for the revolutionaries to follow at this time. Sen advocated a cautious policy, avoiding open acts of terror while planning quietly for a nationwide revolution at some undetermined later date, continuing meanwhile to forge currency notes as a means for supplying funds. Sanyal, on the other hand, wanted immediate and sensational action, assassinations, dacoities, and widespread publication and distribution of revolutionary literature. The result of this quarrel was an attempt by Sanyal early in 1925 to set up the HRA as an organization completely independent from Bengal. He also attempted to organize some kind of cooperative effort with other groups who were discontented with the relatively cautious policies of both Anushilan and Jugantar.<sup>44</sup>

The new and younger members of the revolutionary parties, many of whom had joined during Gandhi's 1920-1922 Non-Cooperation Movement, were demanding immediate and spectacular action. They had been disillusioned with Gandhi when he called off the Movement, and now they were becoming disillusioned with Anushilan for its cautious policy. Probably the young terrorists were also somewhat disillusioned with the growing tendency of the older revolutionaries to cooperate with Congress, especially Jugantar's cooperation with the Swarajists.<sup>45</sup>

Several groups split off from both the Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar at this time. Surya Sen had organized a branch of Jugantar in Chittagong in April 1922.<sup>46</sup> Although initially sponsored by top Jugantar leaders, within several years, Surya Sen was pursuing a policy virtually independent of the main Jugantar party and was in contact with other dissident groups, especially with the secession faction of Anushilan in Dacca under the leadership of Nalini Datta. It will be recalled that Surya Sen's group was responsible for the raid on the Assam Bengal Railway in 1923,<sup>47</sup> and he later became nationally famous as the leader of the Chittagong Armoury Raid in 1930.<sup>48</sup>

Nalini Datta's group seceded from the Anushilan after a quarrel broke out between him and the old guard Anushilan leadership in Dacca. The dispute centered around the activities of Nalini Gupta, an agent of M. N. Roy who came to India twice to recruit terrorists to communism. Because of his knowledge of bomb-making, Gupta gained tremendous popularity and prestige among a certain group of Anushilan members. This undoubtedly excited the jealousy of the older leaders. As an outcome of the resulting quarrel, Nalini Datta and a group of revolutionaries seceded from the party.<sup>49</sup> In addition, there were at least two other secessions from Anushilan at this time, one group led by Charu Bikash Datta and another in North Bengal led by Suresh Bharadwaj.<sup>50</sup>

In summary then, by early 1925 both Anushilan and Jugantar were having difficulty holding their younger members in line. The HRA was virtually independent of Anushilan, there were at least three secession groups from Anushilan in Bengal, and one virtually independent Jugantar group in Chittagong.<sup>51</sup> As far as the Anushilan Samiti is concerned, Norendra Sen must certainly bear some of the blame for this state of affairs. Apparently he would tolerate no independent initiative on the part of constituent units of the party nor would he initiate definite terrorist actions as the younger members were demanding. In these circumstances, the only recourse for the dissidents was to secede and to form independent groups. Sanyal attempted to take advantage of this situation by approaching the leaders of the dissident secession groups with a view to organizing some common effort with the HRA.<sup>52</sup> However, the large-scale arrests

in 1924 and Sanyal's own subsequent arrest in 1925, put an end to his amalgamation efforts.

In spite of Sanyal's advocacy of sensational acts of terror, the major activity of the party during its two years of existence was not centered on murdering British or Indian officials, but on collecting money by means of dacoity, the principal victims being wealthy Indians. Between March 1923 and May 1925, three successful dacoities were carried out. While these raids did supply the HRA with urgently needed money, they also alerted the police to the activities of this organization, and as a consequence, its members came under close police surveillance.

The attempt to carry out another part of its program, namely, securing support of Russia through M. N. Roy, led to the arrest of Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee in October 1924. Chatterjee had been sent to Madras to contact R. C. L. Sharma, M. N. Roy's agent in Pondicherry. The Madras police, however, had been keeping Sharma under surveillance. They noted Chatterjee's visit with Sharma on October 12, followed Chatterjee back to Calcutta, and arrested him there on October 18.<sup>53</sup>

Chatterjee's arrest was a considerable blow to the HRA, especially because of the information he revealed to the police regarding the activities and plans of the Association. Apparently he outlined the entire program of the organization to the police and a document containing resolutions of the United Provinces Provincial Committee of the HRA was found on his person at the time of his arrest.<sup>54</sup> Also, his arrest seemed to end the possibility of effective assistance from M. N. Roy to the organization. But according to the "Note by the Secretary of State," the Home Department by 1925 had clear evidence that Sanyal in fact had been in touch with M. N. Roy and had been receiving funds from him.<sup>55</sup>

In order to carry out the propaganda end of its program, a vernacular newspaper, *Agradoot*, was begun under the leadership of Manmatha Nath Gupta,<sup>56</sup> and in January 1925, Sanyal published several propaganda pamphlets. One of these entitled "The Revolutionary; An Organ of the Revolutionary Party of India" was apparently to be the first issue of a regular periodical.<sup>57</sup> Writing under the pseudonym "Balraj," Sanyal asserted in "The Revolutionary" that "we have taken our inspiration from both the present Soviet Russia and our ancient Bharatiya Seers;



and we are following their foot-prints.”<sup>18</sup> Sanyal attempted to send a copy of “The Revolutionary” through the mails to Rash Behari Bose in Japan; but the letter was intercepted, traced back to Sanyal, and he was arrested and sentenced to two years in prison.

Thus, both of the principal leaders of the HRA, Chatterjee and Sanyal, were in prison by mid-1925, just on the eve of the most daring raid carried out by the party, namely, the Kakori train robbery. The HRA in the United Provinces had not concerned itself with manufacturing bombs or weapons. Apparently it hoped to be able to purchase arms smuggled into the country.<sup>19</sup> The dacoities carried out by the party thus far had not brought in sufficient funds. Also these dacoities had been directed against Indians. Ram Prasad Bismil, one of the new leaders who took over operation of the party after the arrest of Chatterjee and Sanyal, decided to concentrate henceforth on looting of Government moneys.<sup>20</sup>

To this end, a very ambitious train dacoity was planned and carried out on August 9, 1925, near Kakori in the United Provinces, on the Northern Railway line, by nine members of the party. The train was halted by pulling the emergency chain, passengers were kept entrained by several armed revolutionaries, one of whom shot a passenger who attempted to get down, the others looted the postal bags believed to contain Government funds. Within ten minutes the dacoity was completed and the revolutionaries had fled, returning to Lucknow only eight miles away. However, this daring adventure netted the HRA a total of only Rs. 5,000, and the subsequent police investigation and arrests caused the complete collapse of the organization.<sup>21</sup>

More than forty persons were arrested, of whom nearly thirty were tried and convicted. Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee and Sachindra Nath Sanyal, although in prison at the time of the robbery, were also brought to trial and convicted as members of the conspiracy. Chandra Shekhar Azad, Sachindra Nath Bakshi, and Ashfaq Ulla all three actual participants in the robbery—escaped the initial police roundup, but the latter two were subsequently arrested and convicted in a second trial. Of the accused, Ram Prasad Bismil and three others were hanged, Sanyal was given transportation for life, and Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, ten years. Some twenty others were given sentences

ranging from transportation for life to three years imprisonment. The HRA suffered a crushing blow from which it never recovered. However, at least two important members were not immediately arrested, Chandra Shekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh, both of whom later became important in the organization of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association.<sup>62</sup>

The New Violence Party in Calcutta, unlike the HRA in the United Provinces, had been more concerned with collecting and manufacturing bombs than with robbery of money. But the activities of this group likewise came under police surveillance, and in November 1925, eleven members of the party were arrested in a raid at a bomb factory at Dakshineswar, about three miles north of Calcutta.<sup>63</sup> The Dakshineswar arrests brought the activities of the HRA in Bengal to a halt as the Kakori trials had done in the United Provinces.

#### MARXIST INFLUENCE IN THE HRA

It is obvious from some of the evidence that the HRA, or at least some of its members, were already becoming influenced by the Russian Revolution and Marxism. For example, part of the party's program, as given by Chatterjee to the police, involved sending men to Russia and securing the support of M. N. Roy. Chatterjee was arrested just after visiting Roy's agent in Pondicherry. The "Note by the Secretary of State" recorded that Sanyal had been in touch with Roy and had been receiving money from him. Also Sanyal's "The Revolutionary" proclaimed the inspirational debt the HRA owed to "the present Soviet Russia." Finally, one of the resolutions of the United Provinces Provincial Committee of the HRA called for preaching "social revolutionary ideas and communistic principles."<sup>64</sup>

In addition, it is clear that both of the principal founders of the HRA, Chatterjee and Sanyal, had come to accept some aspects of Marxist ideology by 1923 when the party was founded. Chatterjee, in fact, had been exposed to socialist thought during his first term of imprisonment between 1916 and 1920, first in Bengal Presidency Jail and then in Rajshahi Jail. Books and journals were freely available to the prisoners. Chatterjee learned of the Russian Revolution from reading the London monthly magazine, *Nineteenth Century and After*, and was initially much

impressed.<sup>65</sup> Chatterjee also reported having been favorably impressed by Werner Sombart's *Socialism and the Social Movement in the 19th Century*, although he later came to regard this as a very crude exposition of socialism.<sup>66</sup> Although Balshastri Hardas categorically named Chatterjee a confirmed Marxist,<sup>67</sup> it is unlikely that Chatterjee ever completely accepted the full Marxist ideology.<sup>68</sup>

Sanyal's autobiography, *Bandi Jivan* (Life of a Prisoner), gives a very clear picture of the extent to which he was influenced by Marxism. He reported that he first learned of communism in 1923 from a series of conversations with Kutubudin Ahmad, an agent of M. N. Roy.<sup>69</sup> Later Sanyal visited Satya Bhakta, a Hindi author in Kanpur who was sympathetic with communist goals and who had a good library of Marxist literature. Here Sanyal read Bukharin's *A B C of Communism* and several works by Lenin.<sup>70</sup> Sanyal was initially very much impressed with Marxian economics and the economic interpretation of history. He was also much concerned with economic exploitation of labor under capitalist systems. But Sanyal found he could not accept a thoroughgoing materialist philosophy of life; nor could he accept the notion of class struggle.<sup>71</sup> He was apparently much influenced by Vedantist thought, and he could not overcome his faith in God or his belief that there was much of value in traditional Hindu philosophy. Furthermore, he was too much impressed with the tremendous progress of the Western capitalist countries to accept fully Marx's indictment of the capitalist system.<sup>72</sup> Sanyal later categorically denied that he believed in the principles of communism.<sup>73</sup>

Although the matter was considered, Sanyal refused to agree to the inclusion of the words "communist" or "socialist" in the name of the HRA. He explained in his autobiography that he was advised that the open use of such words would cause many wealthy Indians to stop their support of the party. After Sanyal was in jail, Bhagat Singh did reorganize the party in 1928 and added the word "socialist" to the name. This has been interpreted by some to indicate a change in the party's ideology,<sup>74</sup> but Sanyal contended that the party principles remained exactly the same after this reorganization, only the name was changed.<sup>75</sup>

It seems that the Hindu religious influence on the party members was too strong at this time to permit them to succumb

completely to a frankly atheistic, materialist philosophy. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the HRA was much influenced by the Russian Revolution and the socialist experiment in Russia. The party proclaimed that it looked forward to a future independent Indian state in which basic industries and transportation would be owned by the state and economic exploitation of the laboring classes would be ended.<sup>78</sup> The party was also willing to take whatever advantage it could of connections with M. N. Roy, but this should not be interpreted to mean that the HRA accepted Roy's communism.

It might be most accurate to characterize the HRA as a revolutionary group which advocated the use of violence in the anti-imperialist struggle, but which rejected class conflict and sought to bring about socialism in the future independent India by democratic means. Nevertheless, the HRA was the first revolutionary organization in India to begin the transformation from terrorism to communism.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE BACKGROUND TO THE FOURTH OUTBREAK, 1925-1928

The fourth cycle of terrorism in Bengal was similar in several respects to the preceding cycle; (1) it began with the Government's gradual release of the terrorists held under detention, and (2) the initial stimulus for the renewal of violence was a British political blunder, namely, the appointment of the Simon Commission. But the differences between the two outbreaks are much more important, for the terrorist movement after 1928 manifested important new developments, developments which help greatly to explain why many of the terrorists converted to Marxism after the British finally crushed this violent phase of activity in the early 1930's.

#### THE QUIESCENT PHASE

The period between 1925 and 1927 may be characterized as one of relative revolutionary inactivity. Only one terrorist murder occurred in Bengal. Most of the leaders of the revolutionary parties were either in jail or under detention. Those revolutionaries who had escaped arrest recognized that they were too weak and disorganized to undertake fresh overt terrorist activity.<sup>1</sup> British Intelligence summed up the situation as follows:

Since the promulgation of the Bengal Ordinance on the 25th October 1924 no revolutionary outrage is known to have occurred. The Jugantar party as a whole has given up any ideas of violence for an indefinite period but intends to formulate a definite policy after meeting in strength at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur on May 2nd.

The Dacca Anushilan continues its organising and note-forging activities, but with no immediate intention of committing crimes of violence. Organisation and collection of arms for a future revolution continues, and to this end they seek the cooperation of Bolshevik Russia and Indian revolutionaries abroad.

The Chittagong party, formerly under Nogendra Sen [Surya Sen] alias Jhulu (now an Ordinance prisoner), in alliance with refractory sections of the Anushilan under Nalini Datta, of Dacca, and Charu Bikash Datta, of Chittagong, intends to embark on an extensive campaign of organised violence against Government property, officials, and buildings, and to that end these sections are very busy trying to increase their store of explosives and bombs and arms, and to distribute them at convenient centres throughout Bengal.<sup>2</sup>

By December 1926, the situation had become so outwardly quiet that the Bengal Government decided to begin a gradual release of prisoners detained under the Ordinance and Act of 1924-1925. The releases actually began in March 1927 and by December, only thirteen persons remained in jail.<sup>3</sup>

As the Government of Bengal was quick to realize, however, the mass arrests and detentions had not prevented intensive organizational activities among those revolutionaries who had escaped arrest.<sup>4</sup> In particular, three new major organizations originated in this period: (1) Shree Sangha, and (2) the Bengal Volunteers, both growing out of the initial organizing efforts of Hem Chandra Ghosh, and (3) the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, which grew out of the ruins of the HRA.

More important, perhaps, were several new trends that were developing during this period of quiescence. For instance, the connection between the terrorists and the Bengal Congress Party, particularly the Swarajists, became even closer than it had been in the early 1920's. Also, it seemed that toward 1927 and 1928, the two major revolutionary groups in Bengal would merge into one unified revolutionary party. Furthermore, the revolutionary detenus were imbibing heavily of the new Marxist doctrines while biding their time in jail. And finally, a new generation of activists arose within the established revolutionary parties who rejected the old guard leadership and after 1928 led the parties to new extremes in revolutionary terrorism. This period of outward quiescence was thus actually a period of considerable organizational ferment during which major trends were developing which would have important consequences on the nature of the revolutionary movement when it began its new phase of intense overt activity in 1928.

### THE ORIGINS OF SHREE SANGHA AND THE BENGAL VOLUNTEERS.

After 1928 two new terrorist parties emerged in Bengal to challenge the dominant positions which had been shared by the Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar for nearly a quarter of a century. These new organizations were the Shree Sangha and the Bengal Volunteers, both of which developed from a common revolutionary group organized by Hem Chandra Ghosh of Barisal as early as 1912.<sup>5</sup> This group was known only by the name "revolutionary fraternity," and was not formally connected with any other terrorist group, although from time to time it cooperated with the Jugantar federation.<sup>6</sup> By the time of World War I, the revolutionary fraternity had grown to considerable prominence. It was involved with Jugantar in the plot to import arms from abroad, after which members of the organization were arrested and held under preventive detention for the duration of the war.

After the release of the terrorists from detention in 1919, Hem Chandra Ghosh attempted to reorganize his revolutionary fraternity. However, since he and the older leaders of the party were too well-known to the police, Ghosh decided to de-emphasize and de-centralize the fraternity and to encourage instead the formation of small, secret groups under newer leadership. Ghosh and his colleagues let it be known that they were dropping out of national politics, while younger men quietly emerged to carry on the reorganizational work.<sup>7</sup> The revolutionary fraternity undertook no open terrorism during this reorganizational period. Rather, emphasis was placed on building and conserving strength for some future action.<sup>8</sup>

In 1921-1922, the new leaders founded a number of subordinate, open, legal organizations, known by such names as Santi Sangha and Dhruba Sangha, to serve as a cover and to perform social service functions. These front organizations in turn founded a number of gymnasiums for teaching physical exercise and for recruiting young boys into the movement.<sup>9</sup> In Dacca, the leadership of the revolutionary fraternity eventually fell to Anil Roy, then a graduate student at Dacca University. This group under Roy's leadership formed the nucleus of what later became known as the Shree Sangha. In 1924, Roy founded the Social Service League as another legal front organization, similar to the Santi Sangha and the Dhruba Sangha. However, the

Dacca police were not deceived about the true nature of the organization. In 1925, the Intelligence Branch of the Bengal Government used the name "Shree Sangha," the Bengali equivalent of "Social Service League," to denote the Dacca revolutionary fraternity under the leadership of Roy.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, the Social Service League established connections with a Dacca women's organization known as the Deepali Sangha (translated variously as "Lamp for Enlightenment" "Association of the Enlightened," or "Torchbearers Association") Deepali Sangha was founded in 1923 by Miss Leela Nag as one of the first women's organizations in the nationalist movement. Perhaps its most important activity was working to improve the social and economic position of women in Bengal, especially through education Deepali Sangha, through its ten to twenty branches in Dacca, operated a number of free elementary schools and two high schools for Dacca girls. A third high school owed its initial inspiration to the Deepali movement.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Deepali Sangha emphasized adult female education and arts and craft training. Midday and evening classes were held to prepare women to pass the high school matriculation examination and to prepare them to earn their own living.<sup>12</sup> Activities of the Deepali Sangha gradually spread to Calcutta where the organization was very active among women students at Calcutta University and Bethune College Miss Nag extended her feminist activities in 1930 by beginning the publication of a ladies' monthly journal, *Jayashree*. Except for two interruptions due to Government suppression, *Jayashree* has been published continuously to the present day. Deepali Sangha also emphasized physical education for women. Pulin Das, the well-known old Anushilan revolutionary, was engaged to give instruction in lathi and dagger play and judo.<sup>13</sup>

In 1924, Miss Nag began an annual women's arts and crafts exhibition in Dacca to encourage women in their home handicrafts. To assist her in these exhibitions, she called on the Social Service League and Anil Roy, her former classmate at Dacca University and her future husband. Thus the Social Service League and the Deepali Sangha began a collaboration which eventually led to women being drawn into the revolutionary Shree Sangha.<sup>14</sup> This became the first terrorist group to include both male and female membership. Here was a radically new element



in the terrorist movement, for previously terrorist organizations in Bengal had sought to forbid their members from having girl friends or marrying, and certainly they did not permit women in the organizations themselves. It is noteworthy that the participation of women in the terrorist movement in the mid-1920's foreshadowed the large role women would play in the Civil Disobedience Movement of the early 1930's.

Meanwhile a group of old revolutionary fraternity members in Calcutta was developing along somewhat different lines. In 1926 this Calcutta group began publishing a Bengali monthly journal called *Benu* (Flute), which quickly became one of the most important revolutionary organs in Bengal.<sup>15</sup> Until its suppression in 1931, it could boast of publishing the works of some of the most important Bengali writers of the time. It was perhaps inevitable that the terrorists publishing this journal should be designated by the police as the "Benu Group," in exactly the same way that Jugantar and Ghadr had been given their names by the police from the names of the journals they were publishing.

Until 1928 both the Benu Group and Shree Sangha considered themselves as part of the same overall organization, namely, the old revolutionary fraternity of Hem Chandra Ghosh. Yet by 1926 it was becoming evident that the two groups were drifting apart. There was a great difference of emphasis in the two wings of the party. Shree Sangha emphasized upliftment of women through education, and social reform, welfare, and philanthropic work, obviously reflecting the influence of Vivekananda's teachings on Anil Roy and Leela Nag. The Shree Sangha men carried on relatively little terrorist activity, although, as will be seen, the women were participants in some terrorism. The Benu Group, on the other hand, stressed immediate violent action and was less interested in social reform or welfare work.<sup>16</sup> Also it appears that a personal leadership conflict was developing between Hem Chandra Ghosh and Anil Roy.<sup>17</sup> However, the two groups managed to avoid an open split until just after the 1928 session of Congress in Calcutta.

#### TERRORISM AND BENGAL CONGRESS PARTY POLITICS

While Shree Sangha and the Benu Group were emerging as more or less separate terrorist groups outside the fold of the

two major terrorist parties, both Jugantar and Anushilan were making their influence felt in powerful ways in Bengal Congress Party politics. The association of terrorists with Congress in Bengal has already been noted.<sup>18</sup> This association was relatively peaceful as long as C. R. Das was alive, but Das died in June 1925, and thus set the stage for a leadership struggle between J. M. Sen Gupta and Subhas Chandra Bose lasting well into the 1930's and involving both Anushilan and Jugantar.

Immediately after Das' death, a number of candidates vied for his position, but a visit by Gandhi to Bengal at this time kept the party from breaking up into serious factional rivalries. Furthermore, one of the developing powerful leaders of Bengal politics, Subhas Chandra Bose, was under detention in Mandalay. In these circumstances, J. M. Sen Gupta emerged initially as Das' successor. Sen Gupta was elected leader of the Swarajya Party, President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, and later Mayor of Calcutta, thus taking over the most important positions in Bengal politics, positions formerly held by Das.<sup>19</sup>

Sen Gupta attempted to preserve the alliance between the terrorists and the Swarajya Party that had been so important to C. R. Das. According to Bengal Intelligence, Sen Gupta

probably realised that the Swarajya party could not succeed in election campaigns, whether for Council or municipal bodies, without their [the terrorists'] help. The terrorists depended on the financial support of the Swarajya party. It is thus clear that the Swarajya party and the terrorists were interdependent and were component parts of the same revolutionary machine.<sup>20</sup>

But Sen Gupta's attempt to hold the support of the terrorists was threatened by disagreements over preservation of another of Das' alliances, namely that with the Bengali Muslims. Muslims had been cooperating with Congress since 1916 and had, furthermore, been firm supporters of Swarajist politics in Bengal and elsewhere. C. R. Das had been especially concerned to preserve this alliance. When he became Mayor of Calcutta in 1924, a Muslim, Saheed Suhrawardy, had been elected Deputy Mayor. Also, many Swarajist seats in the Bengal Assembly were held by Muslims. However, when Mustapha Kemal Pasha abolished the Caliphate in March 1924, one of the most important bases of the Hindu-Muslim alliance was destroyed. The Khilafat movement

in India began to break up almost immediately. But in Bengal, Das made a determined effort to preserve communal unity even after the abolition of the Caliphate. As early as December 1923, Das and the Bengal Swarajists drew up the so-called "Bengal Pact" to serve as a model alliance between the two religious communities, but they failed to get specific endorsement of this pact from the Congress Party at its annual session in December 1923. However, Das did get the pact ratified by the Sirajganj meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress in May 1924.<sup>21</sup> The pact provided for recognition of separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims in the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the majority religious community in any given district to be entitled to sixty per cent of the representatives in local elected bodies, reservation of fifty-five per cent of appointive governmental posts for Muslims, prohibition of any resolution or enactment affecting the religion of any community without the consent of seventy-five per cent of the elected members of that community, safeguards against offense to Hindu religious sentiment in regard to cow slaughter, prohibition of music in processions before mosques, and joint Hindu-Muslim committee to be established to arbitrate disputes between the two communities.<sup>22</sup>

According to Subhas Chandra Bose, this pact "had served to convince all Moslems that he [Das] was their real friend"; but unfortunately, as Bose continued, "with the death of the Desh-bandhu [Das], the Moslem community no longer retained their former confidence in the Swaraj Party".<sup>23</sup>

Under these conditions, Sen Gupta found he could not preserve the alliance with both the Muslims and the terrorists. In early 1926, those terrorists who were active in Bengal Congress politics organized themselves into the Karmi Sangha (Workers Association). Members of this group were active during the communal riots of that year in Bengal, and they set as their avowed object the destruction of the Bengal Pact.<sup>24</sup> At an unruly meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress at Krishnagar, May 22, 1926, members of the Karmi Sangha forced the conference chairman, B. N. Sasmal, to leave the chair after delivering an address which included two passages objectionable to the terrorists.<sup>25</sup> In the first passage, which could not even be read out due to the uproar from the floor, Sasmal severely condemned the terrorist movement. In the second

passage, which was read out but which was deleted on motion from the floor, Sasmal stated that there was a small group of men inside Congress who were trying to divert the party toward violent method and who did not believe in the policy of Congress. On motion from Sen Gupta, the conference disassociated itself from the sentiments expressed in Sasmal's speech, and Sasmal promptly resigned as chairman of the conference.<sup>26</sup>

The major dispute at the Krishnagar conference, however, revolved around the annulment of the Bengal Pact. Here Sen Gupta and the Karmi Sangha took opposite sides. When Sen Gupta opposed discussion of the issue, the Karmi Sangha, "by organised rowdyism . . . swamped the meeting".<sup>27</sup> Sen Gupta and his Swarajist followers walked out, and the rump meeting, dominated by the Karmi Sangha, passed a resolution annulling the Bengal Pact.<sup>28</sup> Sen Gupta then called a meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee on June 13, 1926, at which a resolution was passed declaring that the Krishnagar conference was unconstitutional and hence the resolution rescinding the Bengal Pact was null and void. Also a new executive committee of the Bengal Congress was appointed from which all members of the Karmi Sangha were excluded. The younger section of the Karmi Sangha was incensed at this action and replied with a manifesto, published in June, bitterly attacking the older Congress leaders, condemning communal electorates, and asserting the right of Hindus to take out processions with music along the public roads.<sup>29</sup>

Since new elections to the Bengal Legislature were scheduled for November 1926, and since the Swarajists badly needed the support of the terrorists in contesting these elections, Sen Gupta made a compromise with the Karmi Sangha in August, by which twelve terrorists were appointed to the executive committee.<sup>30</sup> B. N. Sasmal and eleven of his followers resigned from the executive committee at the same time. Sen Gupta apparently came to the conclusion that the alliance with the terrorists was more important than the alliance with the Muslims. This compromise with the Karmi Sangha paid off for Sen Gupta, for in the November elections, the Swarajists took seventy-five percent of the general seats in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. Sasmal, running as an independent, was defeated for a seat from the Midnapore constituency.<sup>31</sup>

In spite of his various setbacks and defeats, Sasmal came back as president of the Bengal Congress Committee in December 1926, when Sen Gupta resigned that position. Sasmal nominated only four Karmi Sangha members to his executive committee, again demonstrating that he had not learned that terrorist support was necessary to remain in power in Bengal politics. Early in 1927, Sasmal was forced out as president by the Karmi Sangha. In May 1927, Subhas Chandra Bose was released from detention and in November he was elected the new president. Of the sixty members of the new executive committee under Bose, twenty were terrorists. Bengal Intelligence reported that an agreement was made at this time between Bose and the Karmi Sangha to the effect that the terrorists would actually control the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee under Bose's overall leadership.<sup>12</sup> Sasmal met his final defeat in the Calcutta Corporation elections of 1927, which turned out to be virtually a clean sweep for the Karmi Sangha. Sen Gupta again was elected Mayor of Calcutta.<sup>13</sup>

Several observations seem important concerning these events of 1925-1927. First, as long as C. R. Das was alive, he could dominate the most important political positions in Bengal. After his death, these positions were held briefly by Sen Gupta, but soon became divided between Sen Gupta and Sasmal. With Sasmal's defeat and Bose's release from prison in 1927, the contest developed between Sen Gupta and Bose. Second, no political leader could remain in power long in Bengal without the support of the terrorists. And finally, there was a bitter antagonism between the terrorists represented in the Karmi Sangha and the Muslims that could be kept under control only while Das was alive.

At the time Bose and the Karmi Sangha agreed to work together to run the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, it was widely believed that Anushilan and Jugantar were on the verge of merging or at least co-operating very closely. Both parties were represented in Karmi Sangha and were, to that extent, already co-operating. But Anushilan and Jugantar, far from merging, actually intensified their mutual rivalry after 1928. The struggle between these two terrorist parties quickly became identified with the struggle between Sen Gupta and Bose, with Sen Gupta allied with Anushilan, and Bose receiving firm

support from Jugantar. But to understand this development, it is necessary first to trace the origin of the Anushilan and Jugantar merger movement.

#### THE ANUSHILAN-JUGANTAR MERGER MOVEMENT

The earliest evidence of a movement for unity between Anushilan and Jugantar goes back to 1924, just after the mass-arrests under the emergency Ordinance. According to Jadugopal Mukherjee, one of the grand old Jugantar revolutionaries, a meeting was held in Midnapore Central Jail, attended by himself and Sailendra Mohan Ghosh, representing Jugantar, and Trailokya Nath Chakraborty and Pratul Chandra Ganguly, representing Anushilan, at which these four leaders took a pledge to merge their parties once they were released from detention.<sup>34</sup>

Although it was widely rumoured among the revolutionaries who had avoided detention that some kind of unity move was being made inside jail, no further definite action was taken to implement this merger until 1927 after all of the old *dadas* of both parties had been released. However, the *dadas'* discussion of the idea of a merger considerably encouraged the younger members of both parties, who were somewhat disgusted at the inefficient division of the revolutionary movement into two major and several minor parties. For instance, Satish Pakrashi, a young Anushilan member, expressed the hope that a strong revolutionary movement would emerge from the union of the two groups,<sup>35</sup> while Narain Bannerji, a young Jugantar member, expressed the hope that a unified movement be able to counteract the growing communal sentiment which was then attracting a large number of Bengali youth.<sup>36</sup>

Just after the release of Jadugopal Mukherjee in 1927, a secret three-day meeting was held at the home of Narain Bannerji in Calcutta to discuss amalgamation. Pratul Ganguly and Robi Sen represented Anushilan, Jadugopal Mukherjee, Bhupati Mazumdar, and Manoranjan Gupta represented Jugantar, and Bepin Ganguly, Girin Mukherji, Purna Das and some others represented sub-groups attached to Jugantar. In all some twenty revolutionary leaders attended.<sup>37</sup>

The meeting produced no formal agreement on merging the two parties. However, the leaders did agree to cooperate with

each other in pressuring Congress to demand complete independence. To this end, the leaders discussed and drew up plans for an Independence League. They hoped that their desire for unity would be realized through this organization. The leaders of the two parties also agreed that they would have nothing to do with the newly emerging communist movement in India. This latter agreement is significant, for the amalgamation meeting was attended largely by the older party leaders. Apparently they were already beginning to worry about losing the allegiance of the younger members to the new communist ideology.<sup>38</sup>

Far from producing unity, however, this new plan for an Independence League seems to have caused even greater disunity than before. According to the report of Satish Pakrashi, some of the *dadas* at the amalgamation meeting were unwilling to initiate such a League without the support of at least a few Congress leaders. Accordingly they approached certain Congress members and secured the support of Subhas Chandra Bose, J. M. Sen Gupta, Kiran Shankar Roy, and Maulana Azad, but on the condition that the revolutionary emphasis of the League be watered down. Pakrashi stated that some of the younger members opposed the whole idea of inviting the support of those Congress members who had no sympathy with the revolutionary movement. In fact, these disaffected younger members proceeded to create a separate organization on a district basis called the Dacca District Freedom League. Pakrashi became the secretary of this organization. Niranjana Sen organized a similar group in Barisal, and this was followed by other Leagues in different districts.<sup>39</sup>

The report of Narain Bannerji indicates a different kind of tension within the amalgamation meeting. He wrote that Kanai Ganguly suggested to the meeting that the revolutionaries join the Independence League then being organized by Nehru. But the *dadas* wanted Subhas Chandra Bose to be spokesman for the Bengal revolutionaries at the all-India level, and they feared that joining the Nehru organization would tend to submerge Bose under Nehru. Therefore a separate organization called the Independence for India League, Bengal, was established under Bose's leadership. Kiron Shankar Roy became its secretary.<sup>40</sup>

Since the amalgamation meeting was held at the home of Bannerji, he should have been in a position to know what trans-

pired, even though he merely acted as a guard for the secret meeting. However, his report contains a serious discrepancy, namely, that Nehru was organizing or had already organized his Independence League in 1927 when this amalgamation meeting was held. According to both Nehru and Bose, the Independence League was not organized until the All Parties Conference at Lucknow in August 1928.<sup>41</sup> Bannerji is probably guilty of an anachronism here. He no doubt read back into the amalgamation meeting something that happened a year or so later. According to Bose, he and Nehru organized the Independence League just after the All Parties Conference so that the Congress left wing could put forward its demand for complete independence and voice its opposition to Congress's then more moderate demand for dominion status as contained in the draft constitution prepared by Motilal Nehru.<sup>42</sup> Bose reported that branches of the League were organized immediately after the conference and that in November 1928, the League was formally inaugurated at a meeting in Delhi. He did not mention the fact that the idea for such a league originated with the Bengal terrorists.<sup>43</sup>

Michael Brecher, Nehru's biographer, agreed that the League grew out of the combined efforts of Bose and Nehru to oppose dominion status and to demand complete independence, but Brecher concluded that it was Nehru who

virtually created the League and did most of the work, drafting its communications and preparing its constitution. Indeed, but for his interest the organization would have been still born.<sup>44</sup>

The report of R. E. A. Ray of Bengal Intelligence gives a still different account of the origin of the League. Ray wrote that the Independence League for India was formed by the "Bengal terrorist party" in early 1928. Furthermore Ray commented that, just after Bose became president of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee in 1927, Bose and the terrorists worked out a scheme for a Workers' League, the basis of which was to be complete independence; and that these Bengal terrorists had persuaded Nehru to move the independence motion at the Madras session of Congress in December 1927.<sup>45</sup>

In spite of the conflicting nature of this evidence, some tentative conclusions may be drawn. First, it seems clear that the



idea for an Independence League did originate with the Bengal revolutionaries at least a year before Nehru and Bose organized their League at the all-India level,<sup>46</sup> and that definite plans for the League were made at the 1927 amalgamation meeting. Second, although the *dadas* of both Anushilan and Jugantar hoped this League would provide the vehicle for mutual cooperation between the two terrorist parties, the attempt to organize it produced more discord than harmony. Third, one or more essentially local or provincial leagues evidently did come into existence at least by early 1928, even though the all-India League was not created by Bose and Nehru until November 1928. And finally, there are strong suggestions of a growing disenchantment among the younger terrorists with the way the revolutionary movement was developing. They were particularly distressed about the division of the movement into two parties and the inability of the *dadas* to effect amalgamation,<sup>47</sup> the growing communalism in Bengal, and the tendency for the older *dadas* to water down their revolutionary program in order to gain support of Congress. The *dadas* on the other hand were disturbed by the growing influence of Marxism among some of the younger members.

#### THE SIMON COMMISSION AGITATION

Similar in effect to the Rowlatt Act of 1919, which had sparked first the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920-1922 and then the revival of open terrorist activity after 1922, the appointment of the Simon Commission in late 1927 was the immediate blunder which sparked the second great outburst of militant nationalism and the renewal of overt terrorist activity in the late 1920's and early 1930's.

Under the terms of the Montagu-Chelmsford Act of 1919, a commission was to be appointed within ten years to investigate the workings of the Reforms and to make recommendations for the future devolution of political power to the Indians. Of course, by law, this commission did not have to be appointed until 1929, but since the life of the English House of Commons would also expire in 1929 and since there was a fear that the Labour Party might win the new elections, the Conservative Government of

Stanley Baldwin decided to appoint the investigating commission two years early.<sup>48</sup> The Conservatives feared that a Labour-appointed commission would be too generous to Indian nationalist demands. However, the Baldwin Government took care that the commission would have the support of all parties in England by appointing two Labourites (one of whom was Clement R. Attlee) and a Liberal (Sir John Simon, the chairman) to the seven-man commission. The blunder of the Baldwin Government was in failing to ensure that the commission would have the support of all parties in India. In fact, by failing to appoint a single Indian, the Government virtually insured that the commission would be opposed by every major nationalist group in India.

The composition of the commission, known as the Statutory Commission, but more popularly as the Simon Commission was announced by the Viceroy in early November 1927. The Indian nationalists responded with an almost unanimous condemnation of the Commission. The British were particularly surprised at the attitude of the usually very pro-British Liberal Federation (or Moderate Party). Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, President of the Moderates, presided over a public meeting in Allahabad in December 1927, which passed a resolution stating that "the exclusion of Indians [was] a deliberate insult to the people of India, as not only does it definitely assign to them a position of inferiority, but what is worse, it denies them the right to participate in the determination of the constitution of their own country."<sup>49</sup>

The British had thus unwittingly provided an issue on which almost all Indian nationalists could unite in opposition, from the bomb-throwing terrorists to the very constitutional Moderates. But this unity was one of negative reaction only. When the Indians attempted to take some positive action of their own, new elements of discord arose, first between the Gandhians and the new Congress left wing led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, then between the predominantly Hindu Congress and the Muslims led by their rising new leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah, then between Nehru and Bose themselves, and finally, within the revolutionary movement, between Bose and Jugantar on the one side, and Sen Gupta and Anushilan on the other.

Congress met for its annual session at Madras in December 1927, a little more than a month after the Simon Commission had

been announced. Evidence of both unity and disunity were manifest here. First, a united Congress resolved to boycott the Simon Commission and to stage demonstrations when the Commission arrived in India and wherever the Commission went within India. Second, a somewhat disunited Congress passed, without Gandhi's approval, a resolution stating that the goal of Congress was complete national independence. This resolution was moved by Jawaharlal Nehru, perhaps, as has been suggested, at the instigation of the Bengal revolutionaries. Both Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, who whole-heartedly supported this resolution, emerged as the pre-eminent leaders of the younger Congress left wing from this time. Third, Congress resolved to authorize the Working Committee to meet with representatives of other parties and organizations to draw up a draft constitution for a future independent India.

The first and third of these resolutions were carried out during the course of the next twelve months; the second resolution, however, was reversed at the next annual session of Congress when dominion status was accepted. The Simon Commission arrived in India on February 3, 1928, and was met by a nationwide *hartal*; and processions and demonstrations greeted the Commission at many places throughout its travels in India. Nevertheless the Commission was able to obtain enough cooperation, especially from some provincial legislatures, to write a factually authoritative report on the workings of the Reforms.

In carrying out the resolution to write a draft constitution, an All Parties Conference attended by representatives from Congress, the Liberal Federation, and the Muslim League, as well as from numerous other organizations, met at Delhi in February 1928. At a second meeting in Bombay in May, a committee headed by Motilal Nehru was appointed to write a draft constitution. The draft prepared by this committee (usually referred to as the Nehru Report) was accepted by an All Parties Conference which met at Lucknow in August 1928. Since the Nehru Report provided for dominion status rather than complete independence outside of the Commonwealth, it was of course unacceptable to the younger Nehru, Bose, and the Congress left wing. However, rather than disrupt the unity of the All Parties Conference, Nehru and Bose, after voicing their objections, acquiesced in the passage of the Report as it stood; then they

immediately organized the Independence League to keep alive their demands for complete independence, and especially to carry on agitation at the forthcoming 1928 Congress session to be held at Calcutta in December.

These events of 1927-1928 clearly indicate that it was the appointment of the Simon Commission and the resulting agitation against it which reinvigorated the nationalist movement and restored to it the fervor and spirit of the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920-1922. The terrorist movement, relatively quiet since 1925, was also revitalized, as events in North India and later in Bengal were to show.

#### THE HINDUSTAN SOCIALIST REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION

The general condition of nationalist excitement which grew out of the Simon Commission agitation lay in the background of the revival of the old Hindustan Republican Association in North India and its reorganization as the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA). A very specific event associated with the protest demonstrations against the Simon Commission led the HSRA to commit a murder of revenge in December 1928, thereby inaugurating a fresh phase of open terrorist activity.

On September 8-9, 1928, a group of revolutionaries, many of them former members of the HRA, met in the deserted ruins of Firoz Shah Kotla on the outskirts of New Delhi to reorganize the terrorist movement in North India. Bhagat Singh, a Punjabi Sikh and former member of the HRA was the principal leader of this group. Chandra Shekhar Azad, a participant in the Kakori train robbery who had never been apprehended, was also an important leader behind this reorganization effort, although he did not personally attend this first meeting. Revolutionaries from the Punjab, United Provinces, and Bihar were present, but conspicuous by their absence were representatives from the Bengal Anushilan Samiti, which had, it will be recalled, provided the chief impetus for founding the original HRA. Balshastri Hardas gave a very revealing, if perhaps biased, reason for the absence of the Anushilan Samiti :

The Anushilan Samiti of Bengal was not represented at the meeting. This body had set such a strange condition

that all the revolutionary struggle thereafter should be carried on under the sole and exclusive leadership of the Samiti, and that in the then conditions, no fresh undertakings or beginnings should be made except the collection of arms and the tightening of the organisations and discipline as well as recruitment of fresh blood. This Samiti was of the opinion that nothing should be undertaken which will entail suspicion and wrath of the Government.

The young band of enthusiastic workers did not much appreciate the idea of unquestioned leadership of the Samiti as they wanted an active share and responsibility in the leadership as well as in the struggle. It became therefore inevitable to brush aside this leadership of the Samiti as well as other useless political bullies and hold the meeting without them.<sup>50</sup>

Although Hardas was generally quite prejudiced against Bengalis, and especially those who became Marxists,<sup>51</sup> nevertheless his testimony does indicate the presence of some tension between the North Indian and the Bengali terrorists. This testimony is confirmed by evidence from British Intelligence reports already cited.<sup>52</sup>

Several important decisions were made at this first organizational meeting of the HSRA. First, following the precedent already established by the HRA, the new organization would abstain from committing dacoities against wealthy Indians and instead would concentrate on raising funds by robbing banks, post offices, and government treasuries. Second, the organization would not waste its strength and personnel by terrorist acts against petty government officials or suspected fellow revolutionaries. Third, the HSRA would be under joint leadership rather than under a single individual. Fourth, all arms and funds would be under control of the central organization. And finally, no provincial unit could undertake any action without prior approval of the center. In spite of the decision against personal leadership, Chandra Shekhar Azad, the most renowned member of the old HRA, was chosen General of the Republican Army, although he was still in hiding from the police and did not attend the meeting. Bhagat Singh and Vijay Kumar Singh were selected to provide liaison between the center and the provincial units of the organization.<sup>53</sup>

One of the first proposals of the HSRA was to commit an act of terror against members of the Simon Commission. To this end, Jatindra Nath Das, a Bengali, was engaged to manufacture bombs for the organization. Since the HSRA had very limited operating funds, no outrages could be carried out immediately. But then an incident occurred in connection with the Simon Commission which provided the HSRA with the perfect opportunity to commit a dramatic act. The Commission was due to arrive in Lahore in October 1928. Therefore a city-wide *hartal* and protest demonstration were scheduled for the day of the Commission's arrival. Lala Lajpat Rai, one of the early Extremists in the nationalist movement and an ardent Arya Samajist, marched at the head of a protest procession toward the train station to meet the Commission. The procession, however, was broken up with a lathi charge by the police, during the course of which Rai was severely beaten. He died several weeks later.

The HSRA resolved at once to avenge the death of this esteemed Punjabi nationalist leader. The Lahore Superintendent of Police, Mr. Scott, and the police officer who had actually inflicted the beating, Mr. J. P. Saunders, were singled out as the victims. The proposed attack on Mr. Scott never took place, but on December 17, 1928, a very carefully planned assassination of Saunders was committed in front of the Lahore police station by Chandra Shekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, and two other members of the HSRA. An Indian police officer was also killed in the course of the shooting. The four assassins made good their escape, and the next day, Azad published a leaflet over the signature "Balraj" (the same code name Sanyal had used as head of the HRA) claiming credit for the assassination and indicating that it was carried out specifically to avenge the death of Rai.<sup>54</sup>

This incident, growing directly out of the Simon Commission agitation, inaugurated the fourth active phase of terrorist activity. It is significant that it started with the murder of a European, an indication, perhaps, that this phase would be more violent and more costly of English lives than any previous terrorist outbreak. Although the police arrested a number of suspects in connection with the Saunders murder, the actual assassins escaped. Bhagat Singh, in fact, made his way to Calcutta in time for the 1928 session of Congress.

THE 1928 CALCUTTA SESSION OF CONGRESS  
AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE  
BENGAL VOLUNTEERS

The period 1928-1930 was a critical turning point in a number of respects for both the Congress-led nationalist movement and the terrorist movement. There were a number of tensions developing within both movements which needed resolution. Within the Congress there was the split between the more moderate Gandhians and the younger left wing. Within the terrorist movement there was the growing rift between Bose and Sen Gupta, between the young terrorists and the old *dadas*, and between the Shree Sangha and the Benu Group. The 1928 session of Congress in Calcutta became the focal point for all of these divisive tendencies.

Consideration of the Nehru Report was the major item of business before the Calcutta Congress. It will be recalled that since this Report recommended dominion status, Jawaharlal Nehru and Bose had organized the Independence League to agitate against it and in favour of complete independence. The Calcutta session thus became a test of strength between the moderate Gandhians and the Independence League. Bose moved an amendment to the Report "to the effect that the Congress would be content with nothing short of independence, which implied severance of the British connection," and even though Gandhi made it virtually a matter of confidence that this amendment be defeated, still more than forty-two per cent of the delegates voted for it.<sup>55</sup> The left wing was obviously too strong to be ignored and therefore a compromise was worked out, a partial victory for Gandhi but not without large concessions to the left wing. The Calcutta session resolved in favour of the Nehru Report but stipulated that it still adhered to the goal of complete independence adopted at Madras in 1927 and that propaganda in favour of complete independence could still be carried on in the name of Congress. However, the real key to the compromise was that Congress qualified its acceptance of the Report by the condition that the British likewise accept it within one year. British rejection of the Report or failure to accept it within one year would result in Congress organizing another mass movement including non-payment of taxes. This com-

promise agreement on the Nehru Report was enough to hold together the two wings of Congress while both waited out the one-year ultimatum. The terrorists, however, were considerably less enthused about following Gandhi this time than they had been in the early 1920's.

With Congress meeting in Calcutta, the heart of terrorism in India, it was only natural that a large number of terrorists should have taken part in the proceedings of the annual session. J. M. Sen Gupta, then a member of the Congress Working Committee, was chairman of the reception committee for this session. It was usual at each annual meeting for a corps of local volunteer youth to be recruited to take care of housekeeping chores during the meetings. The task of organizing the volunteers for the Calcutta session fell to the terrorist *dadas*, who in the presence of national leaders, attempted to merge the efforts of all Bengal terrorist parties in a show of unity. But the initial attempt to organize the volunteers almost broke down in a squabble over who should become commanding general of the corps. The Faridpur Jugantar group put forward their leader, Purna Das, while Anushilan proposed its principal leader from Dacca, Pratul Ganguly. The main Calcutta Jugantar party nominated Surendra Mohan Ghosh, who was then the principal leader of that party after Jadugopal Mukherji retired to medical practice in Ranchi. This leadership struggle resulted in a stalemate from which Subhas Chandra Bose emerged as the successful compromise candidate.<sup>56</sup>

Bose issued a call for 2,000 volunteers to serve in the Congress Volunteer Corps. These volunteers were to receive military training and drill instruction and at least half of them would be dressed in military uniform.<sup>57</sup> The military character of the Corps did not escape the notice of the Viceroy, who directed the Intelligence Branch of the Home Department to report further on the matter.<sup>58</sup> The Director of Intelligence reported back that the question of military drill with arms had been considered at the time volunteers were organized for the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920-1922, and that the conclusion reached by the Government then was that such activity itself did not constitute an offense under Indian law. The Congress Volunteers could be dealt with under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1925, but only if it could be shown that they were inciting



persons to commit acts of violence or otherwise were causing a threat to law and order. Concerning this latter point, the Director concluded that

We have no information so far that the Congress volunteers could be brought within terms of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Of course it will be realized that while it might be necessary to have recourse to the Act, if the situation developed in a menacing way, it would have extremely embarrassing results both practically in dealing with masses of volunteers, who would defy law and court arrest and politically in involving probable arrest of principal Congress leaders and in its effect on moderate opinion which would be very slow to believe that such a step was justified.

It should also be remembered that as far as we know the Congress volunteers are being organized only for the occasion of the Congress meeting in Calcutta. For the meetings of the Congress such volunteers are regularly enrolled every year.<sup>59</sup>

Within a week, however, the Director of Intelligence had apparently received additional information which suggested that the Congress Volunteers might be maintained on a permanent basis in Bengal. In that eventuality, he concluded, the Bengal Government would have to conduct further investigation into the situation.<sup>60</sup>

The Government at this time was apparently unaware of the true composition of the Congress Volunteers. Although a large number of non-terrorist youth undoubtedly volunteered for service, virtually every terrorist party was also represented in the Corps. Jatin Das, then engaged by the HSRA to manufacture bombs, held the rank of major.<sup>61</sup> Purna Das and Harikumar Chakraborty, both associated with Jugantar, and Robi Sen of Anushilan held high-ranking positions in the organization.<sup>62</sup> The two wings of Hem Chandra Ghosh's old revolutionary fraternity, Shree Sangha and the Benu Group, also played important parts in the Corps. This was, in fact, the last occasion on which these two groups worked together as one party until 1939 when both joined the Forward Bloc.

In early 1929, shortly after the conclusion of the Calcutta session, Shree Sangha and the Benu Group formally split apart. The Shree Sangha wing carried on under the same name of Shree

Sangha, but the Benu Group adopted the new title of "Bengal Volunteers" (commonly referred to in Bengal as simply "BV"), thus indicating that it was, or considered itself to be, the permanent successor organization to the *ad hoc* Congress Volunteer Corps. Hem Chandra Ghosh, became titular head of BV, but probably more important was the collective leadership of the younger active members who constituted the executive committee of the new party.<sup>13</sup> A number of branches of BV were created throughout Bengal, one of the most important of which was at Midnapur under the leadership of Dinesh Gupta. And during the next few years, BV became one of the most active and violent of revolutionary groups in carrying out terrorist outrages, especially directed against Europeans

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FOURTH OUTBREAK, 1929-1934

#### AFTERMATH OF THE CALCUTTA SESSION OF CONGRESS

The year 1929 was one of suspenseful waiting on the part of Indian nationalist leaders to see the reaction of the British to the Nehru Report and to the one-year ultimatum issued at the Calcutta session of Congress. The terrorists, especially the HSRA in North India and the younger members of both Jugantar and Anushilan in Bengal, were much less willing to wait. The HSRA took the initiative with a dramatic bomb outrage in the Legislative Assembly chamber in Delhi. The Assembly had been debating the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Disputes Bill, both designed to give the Government more authority in dealing with the rash of strikes and other labour disputes which had recently broken out.<sup>1</sup> The elected members of the Assembly unanimously opposed these bills, but it was apparent that both would be promulgated under the Governor General's power of certification. The HSRA seized this occasion to commit an act of violence which would focus attention on what they considered to be the sham of the legislative assemblies and would awaken the entire nation to the terrorist movement. On April 8, 1929, immediately after the Government announced that the two bills would become law, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Datta stood up in the visitor's gallery and hurled two bombs onto the Assembly floor, purposely aiming to cause minimum bodily injury. No one was killed and injuries were slight. The terrorists did not try to escape; they shouted slogans, scattered propaganda leaflets, and waited to be arrested.<sup>2</sup>

One week later, British police discovered an HSRA bomb factory in Lahore and subsequently made large-scale arrests of known HSRA members on the basis of information provided them by Jai Gopal, an HSRA member who turned state's witness. In May, another bomb factory was uncovered in Saharanpur. Eventually, eighteen terrorists were brought to trial in what became known as the First Lahore Conspiracy Trial. Bhagat

Singh and Batukeshwar Datta, already under arrest in the Assembly Bomb Case, were also named as conspirators. The trial began July 10, 1929, and dragged on with interruptions and delays until the final decision was handed down on October 7, 1930. Bhagat Singh, additionally charged with the murder of Saunders, was given the death sentence. Two others were also sentenced to death, while most of the remainder were given varying terms of imprisonment.<sup>3</sup>

The most dramatic cause for the long delay in completing the trial was a hunger strike which Bhagat Singh, Batukeshwar Datta, Jatin Das, and several other prisoners commenced on July 12, 1929. The hunger-strikers demanded that they be classified as political prisoners and that they be given better food and certain other privileges. As the condition of the strikers grew serious, the Government offered some small concessions, but the fast continued. Ultimately, however, all of the hunger-strikers agreed to take food except Jatin Das, who maintained his fast until his death on September 13, 1929. By this act of self-sacrifice, Das became one of the most celebrated terrorists in the entire history of the movement.<sup>1</sup>

The large-scale arrests following the discovery of the Lahore and the Saharanpur bomb factories severely weakened the HSRA, it never again functioned as a unified party, although individual members and groups attempted, usually unsuccessfully, to carry out a number of other terrorist acts. For instance, Azad and Yashpal, both still absconding, twice planned to free Singh and Datta from jail, but both attempts had to be aborted. Other terrorist acts of the HSRA will be recounted later. The important point here is that the North Indian revolutionaries, with their dramatic bombing of the Assembly, demonstrated that they were unwilling to follow Gandhi's lead as the terrorists had done in the early 1920's.

Gandhi, at this very time, was re-establishing his firm control over Congress politics, thus regaining the position he had given up in 1922 when he called off the Non-Cooperation Movement. To regain control, Gandhi had to win over the support of at least some of the Swarajists and also the Congress left wing, represented by Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru respectively.

In July 1929, Gandhi attempted to undercut the Swarajists by reviving his old tactic of council boycott. Under his prod-

ding, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution calling on all Congress members of the legislative assemblies to resign their seats. This action of the Working Committee was strenuously opposed by the various provincial Congress leaders of Swarajist persuasion, who had not been consulted on the matter and who were taken completely by surprise. Opposition from the Bengal Provincial Congress leadership was particularly strong at a meeting of the AICC called at Allahabad later in July to consider the Working Committee's resolution. Here J. M. Sen Gupta and Subhas Chandra Bose joined sides to force the resolution to be rescinded. The issue was postponed until the next annual session of Congress scheduled for December in Lahore. Very revealing, however, was the shift in Motilal Nehru's position on the question of council boycott. As late as May 1929, Motilal had been a strong advocate of Congress participation in the provincial legislatures. The Bengal Assembly had been dissolved by the Governor because of repeated defeats of the ministry, and new elections had been called for in May. Motilal had encouraged the Bengal Congress to fight the elections and especially to recapture for the Congress Party some of the seats reserved for Muslims. Yet, less than three months later, at the Working Committee meeting, and again at the AICC meeting, Motilal supported Gandhi and the council boycott resolution.<sup>5</sup>

Having apparently won over Motilal, leader of the Swarajist element in Congress, Gandhi proceeded next to bring Motilal's son, Jawaharlal, leader of the left wing, under his control. He did this by promoting him, specifically, by selecting him as the next president of Congress. This was an important turning point in the development of Congress, for Jawaharlal thereafter became a close follower of Gandhi and thereby weakened his influence among the Congress left wing.<sup>6</sup> Subhas Chandra Bose was thus isolated as the major leader of the left wing, especially after J. M. Sen Gupta, Bose's great rival in Bengal politics, was also later won over to Gandhi.

The early stages of the Bose-Sen Gupta rivalry have already been described. During the years 1928-1930, the struggle between them intensified. At the Calcutta session of Congress in December 1928, Sen Gupta had supported Gandhi in defeating Bose's amendment demanding complete independence.\* Although Sen Gupta did side with Bose on the question of council boycott

at the July AICC meeting in Allahabad, the two men were once again opposing each other at the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee meeting in November 1929, when both were contesting for the presidency. Bose won by a narrow margin. Sen Gupta, however maintained his position as Mayor of Calcutta.

In summary, during 1929 Gandhi maneuvered back into a position of control in Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose went their separate ways, and Bose was further isolated by the defection of Sen Gupta to the Gandhian camp. Gandhi was preparing to call a new mass movement should the British fail to meet Congress's demands, but the terrorists, at least the members of the HSRA in North India, were not waiting to see the outcome of Gandhian tactics as they had done during the 1920 mass movement. Outwardly the Bengal terrorist parties were inactive during the year 1929, but inwardly they were in considerable ferment.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVOLT GROUPS

Several examples of a growing estrangement between the older *dadas* and the younger recruits within the terrorist movement have already been cited. The most serious split between the generations, however, occurred in Bengal, especially at the 1928 Calcutta session of Congress and during the subsequent year.<sup>8</sup> During this time, a number of groups were formed called "revolt" or "advance" parties, composed of younger members of both Jugantar and Anushilan and committed to immediate action independent of the *dadas*. The other cases, younger terrorists gained control over already established district branches of the two main parties. These new groups found their origins in the serious re-evaluation undertaken by the terrorists while they were detained in jails during the years 1924-1927. The terrorists, both the old guard and the new recruits who had joined at the time of the 1920-1922 Non-Cooperation campaign, were severely disheartened at the failure of the terrorist movement. While in jail, they undertook first, to determine the causes of their failure, and second, to plan their activities after release in the light of this analysis. A serious divergence of opinion developed in jail between the *dadas* and the younger terrorists on these two points. The *dadas* contended that the revolutionary movement had failed because

of inadequate preparation and concluded that the proper course for the terrorist parties after release would be to refrain from overt acts while gradually building up strength and planning carefully for future actions. The younger terrorists were too impatient to accept this cautious plan of action. Furthermore, they analyzed the situation differently. According to them, the failure of the revolutionary movement had been due to the lack of co-operation between the two major parties. Consequently their first task after release should be amalgamation of the two parties. Many of the younger terrorists were also beginning to feel that the revolutionary movement could not be successful without large-scale support from the masses, and that only a unified revolutionary party would be able to recruit this support. The *dadas*, however, were too much concerned to preserve the identities of their separate parties to seriously consider close cooperation between them.<sup>9</sup>

The *dadas*' reluctance to undertake new overt acts of violence was apparently a source of considerable frustration to the younger members. The terrorist parties had no means for institutional selection of leaders except by a member's demonstration of his bravery and heroism in action. Furthermore, the terrorists won prestige and public acclaim within the Bengal nationalist community mainly by carrying out violent deeds. Hence, as long as no new actions were instituted, the *dadas*' public prestige and position of leadership within the party could not be challenged by the younger members. Of course, not all of the younger terrorists did in fact desire leadership. Many of them seem to have been manifesting a death wish of some kind, since on later terrorist missions, especially among members of the BV, they carried potassium cyanide, and they preferred to take this poison rather than be captured. Apparently some took poison after an act of terror even when not in danger of capture. Nevertheless, all of these younger activists must have craved the public acclaim they would win as a result of dying in action against the British. Many carried notes in their pockets explaining their lofty motives in perpetrating violent acts. The *dadas* were frustrating their death wish and their desire for posthumous praise by not instituting new actions. The only recourse for the younger terrorists was to break away from the control of the elders.

The younger terrorists also came to several other conclusions

regarding their future activities. On reflection, they discovered that up to the time of their imprisonment in 1924-1925, political assassination had been directed almost entirely against fellow Indians, usually officials in the British administration or members of the money-lending class. In fact, according to one Bengali writer, only three English had been killed, all by mistake.<sup>10</sup> Several reasons may be suggested for the terrorists' reluctance to plan and carry out attacks on the British. First, they had a special hatred for their fellow nationals who cooperated with the British, regarding such persons as traitors. Second, the terrorists must have realized, though they never explicitly admitted, that British repression against them would be most severe when British lives were involved. Finally, there may have been some sort of unconscious status conflict between those Bengali *Bhadralok* who held government jobs and those who did not have such jobs. Another kind of status conflict is revealed in the fact that, in the early phase of terrorism at least, the chief victims of dacoity were *non-bhadralok* money-lenders.<sup>11</sup> Whatever the reasons, the young terrorists in jail during the 1920's concluded that it was useless to kill minor Indian officials who were not, after all, the real policy-makers in the administration.

Furthermore, the young terrorists concluded that dacoity for the purpose of obtaining operating funds was a waste of energy. All prior dacoity had yielded only trifling sums of money, although exaggerated claims were usually made by the terrorists.<sup>12</sup> The terrorists resolved to rely on money from home, from friends, and from wealthy Indians sympathetic to their cause. Still further, the young terrorists concluded that all efforts at obtaining arms from abroad had been failures, and hence it was a waste of effort to send any more revolutionaries overseas. It would be better to concentrate on obtaining arms already in India. Finally, they concluded that in the future, they should concentrate on large-scale revolutionary uprising and guerrilla warfare rather than individual terrorist acts which had characterized the movement in the past.<sup>13</sup>

When the Anushilan-Jugantar amalgamation effort broke down in 1927, many of the young terrorists decided that they could not further their aims by continued association with the old parties. Therefore, dissidents from both Anushilan and Jugantar began breaking away, and from 1928 onward, they formed new



groups of their own, generally known as "revolt" and later as "advance" parties. Among the important leaders of these new parties were such men as Niranjana Sen and Benoy Roy of the main Jugantar party, and Satish Pakrashi and Pratul Bhattacharjya of Anushilan. These new groups soon established close contact with Ganesh Ghosh, Sujya Sen, and Nirmal Sen of the Chittagong Jugantar group, a group which had always been somewhat independent of the main Calcutta Jugantar Party.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to Chittagong, several other district branches of the main Jugantar party also came under the control of these younger terrorists, especially Barisal, Madaripur, and Hooghly. The Dacca, Mymensingh, Barisal, South Calcutta, and Baharampur branches of Anushilan also showed evidence of control by the younger section of activists.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the Dacca District Freedom League and the Barisal Independence League under Niranjana Sen, the Bengal Volunteers, and the HSRA, all may be considered manifestations of "revolt" mentality.

The Calcutta session of Congress had seen the split between generations become particularly severe and had also provided an opportunity for these young terrorists from North India and all over Bengal to come together to plan for a mass revolutionary effort. The nation-wide mass uprising, of course, never occurred. But the terrorist movement did take new directions after 1928, especially because of the influence of the revolt groups. First, the younger terrorists, by forming new groups, demonstrated that they were no longer willing to follow the cautious policy of the *dadas*. Second, they directed their terrorist murders increasingly toward Europeans. Third, they did plan and carry out the closer thing yet to a true revolutionary, as opposed to terrorist, effort, namely their raid on Chittagong. And finally, they were increasingly inspired by Marxist ideas, especially the notion that the masses must be brought into the struggle.

#### THE 1930 CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT AND THE CONTINUATION OF TERRORIST VIOLENCE

Meanwhile, on the national scene, the British ~~did~~ seem to be making some response to the ultimatum presented them at the 1928 Calcutta session of Congress. The Viceroy, Lord Irwin,

had visited England in mid-1929 to confer with the new Labour Ministry. Shortly after his return, he issued a statement on October 31 saying in part that he had been authorized to affirm that the Declaration of 1917 implied the eventual attainment of dominion status for India. He further declared that, after the Simon Commission Report was published, a Round Table Conference would be called in London to hear testimony from Indian representatives on the Report before it was presented to Parliament. The Viceroy's statement did not constitute a complete acceptance of the ultimatum issued by Congress, but it was interpreted by Indian nationalists to be a step in the right direction.

In order to frame a reply to the Viceroy's statement, an All Parties Conference was convened in Delhi in November. Arrangements were also made for Gandhi to meet personally with the Viceroy in December just before the 1929 Lahore session of Congress. At the All Parties Conference, a manifesto was adopted which expressed appreciation to the Viceroy for his statement and pledged to cooperate with the British in working out a dominion status constitution. However, the manifesto further proposed that the Round Table Conference should be specifically convened to draw up the actual constitution, not merely to consider the next step.

Subhas Chandra Bose, now virtually isolated as leader of the Congress left wing, opposed this manifesto and, in fact, drafted a separate statement opposing both the acceptance of dominion status and participation in the Round Table Conference. It was shortly after this Delhi All Parties Conference that the Bengal Congress Committee met and elected Bose president by a narrow margin over Sen Gupta. Bose, by this time, regarded Sen Gupta as completely within the Gandhian camp.<sup>16</sup> However, it is noteworthy that Sen Gupta retained the support of the older Anushilan terrorists while Jugantar and presumably the "revolt" groups sided with Bose.

The meeting between Governor General Irwin and Gandhi, accompanied by Motilal Nehru, was held as scheduled on December 13, 1919, just on the eve of the annual session of Congress. At this meeting, Gandhi and Motilal sought a definite promise that dominion status would be accorded to India, but apparently the political situation in England had changed since the October 31 announcement, and hence the Viceroy was unable to give this

assurance. The year of waiting was running out, no further assurances were forthcoming, and Gandhi therefore went to the Lahore session prepared to ask for authority to organize another mass movement.

During 1929, the Bengal revolutionaries had remained outwardly quiet while the various "revolt" groups were being organized, and the HSRA had been relatively inactive since the arrests following the Assembly bomb incident. However, some remaining members of the HSRA who had avoided arrest were insistent on continuing open violence. On the morning of December 13, as Irwin was returning to the capital from a trip to south India for his meeting with Gandhi that same day, Yashpal and Bhagavati Charan attempted to blow up the Viceroy's train on the outskirts of Delhi. The train was damaged but Irwin escaped injury<sup>17</sup>. Thus the HSRA, or at least several members of this party, had once again seized the initiative with a dramatic act of terror, failure though it was. However, this evidence of resurgent terrorism in North India only reinforced Gandhi's determination to ask for civil disobedience at the Lahore session. Gandhi was very concerned with the growing violence in the country and believed that only a non-violent mass movement under his leadership could save India from impending lawlessness. This was one of the reasons he gave Irwin just prior to inaugurating the 1930 movement :

It is common cause that, however disorganized, and, for the time being insignificant it may be, the party of violence is gaining ground and making itself felt. Its end is the same as mine. But I am convinced that it cannot bring the desired relief to the dumb millions. And the conviction is growing deeper and deeper in me that nothing but unadulterated non-violence can check the organised violence of the British Government. My experience, limited though it undoubtedly is, shows that non-violence can be an intensely active force. It is my purpose to set in motion that force, as well against the organised violent force of the British rule as the unorganised violent force of the growing party of violence. To sit still would be to give reign to both the forces above mentioned.<sup>18</sup>

At the Lahore session, Gandhi introduced a resolution condemning the attempted assassination of the Viceroy, but succeeded in

getting it passed by a bare majority. Shortly after the conference, he wrote an article in *Young India* under the caption "Cult of Bomb" again condemning terrorism, to which the HSRA replied with a long tract entitled "Philosophy of Bomb" justifying its resort to violence.<sup>19</sup>

The Lahore Congress was in a sense a victory for the left wing, for resolutions were passed which declared that the Nehru Report had lapsed and that the goal of Congress was again defined as complete independence. Furthermore, Congress resolved to boycott the forthcoming Round Table Conference and authorized the AICC to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement including non-payment of taxes whenever the AICC deemed the time appropriate. The Lahore Congress also called for complete boycott of central and provincial legislative councils, thus enacting the policy which Gandhi had attempted to force on Congress in July. Council boycott was, of course, bitterly opposed by Subhas Chandra Bose, but supported by Sen Gupta.<sup>20</sup>

Now that complete independence was accepted as the goal, Bose attempted to swing the Congress in an even more radical direction by introducing a resolution calling for Congress to set up parallel governments and to organize workers, peasants, and youth in support of these governments.<sup>21</sup> The defeat of this resolution, and the fact that left wingers were omitted from the new Working Committee for the coming year are indices of the extent of the decline of Bose's and the left wing's influence, now that Gandhi had won over Jawaharlal Nehru.

Gandhi did not initiate the Civil Disobedience Movement until mid-March 1930 with his dramatic 250-mile march to the sea to symbolically manufacture salt in violation of the Government's monopoly salt laws. The terrorists were paying little attention to Gandhi this time. Members of the much-weakened HSRA were still planning and carrying out terrorist outrages. On February 21, 1930, Bhagwan Das of the HSRA shot and killed Jai Gopal, the former party member who had turned state's witness and whose testimony had resulted in the identification and arrest of numerous HSRA members. Azad, almost a legendary figure by now, carried out a dramatic daylight dacoity on a busy street in Delhi.<sup>22</sup>

These activities, however, served to alert the police, and in

the spring of 1930, after the Civil Disobedience Movement was underway, the police rounded up a group of twenty-six members of the HSRA and brought them to trial in what became known as the Second Lahore Conspiracy Case. Still later, more members of the HSRA were arrested and tried in the Delhi Conspiracy Case. These fresh arrests and trials thoroughly disorganized the already weak party. Although some individual members of the party planned and carried out further isolated terrorist acts, the North Indian movement came virtually to an end, especially after Chandra Shekhar Azad took his own life on the point of capture after a dramatic shoot-out with the police in Allahabad. Yashpal, the last important leader, was arrested in January 1932. The remnants of the HSRA later joined with the Anushilan Samiti to form the Revolutionary Socialist Party in 1940.<sup>21</sup> Some individual members of the HSRA plus members of the Ghadr Party gradually drifted into the Communist Party of India.

The terrorist movement in North India had certain characteristics which set it off from Bengal terrorism. It was less old, its roots were less deep, and consequently the parties were less under the control of an older generation of *dadas*. Hence, during each of its phases of active existence, the younger members were able to carry out immediate and dramatic acts of violence uninhibited by the caution of party elders. Perhaps because of this lack of caution, the police were able to deal with the movement more easily and more thoroughly than in Bengal.

Meanwhile, the Bengal terrorist parties which had fallen under the control of young activists were carrying out their most dramatic and daring raids in the entire history of the revolutionary movement in India. Slightly less than a month after the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1925 expired,<sup>22</sup> and thirteen days after Gandhi reached the sea on his historic Salt March, the Chittagong "revolt" group led by Surya Sen and now styled the Indian Republican Army, Chittagong Branch, carried out a spectacular raid on the city of Chittagong. This incident, usually referred to as the Chittagong Armoury Raid, clearly revealed the new directions the terrorist movement was taking. It was the closest thing yet to a true revolutionary uprising, and it was directed primarily against Europeans.

In Chittagong, as elsewhere in Bengal, there was a very close connection between the terrorists and the Congress Party.

In the autumn of 1929, with the prospects of a nation-wide mass movement in the offing, the Chittagong Congress Party became divided between those who would follow Gandhi's lead and those who had no confidence in non-violent methods. In a rather stormy meeting on September 21, 1929, the Gandhians were defeated and the executive committee of the Chittagong Congress fell to the control of persons sympathetic to terrorist methods.<sup>25</sup> Having the local Congress on their side made it easier for the terrorists in Chittagong to recruit and to carry on their organizing activities.

The Indian Republic Army, Chittagong Branch, included as many as sixty-two young men of high school and early college age. On the night of April 18, Sen divided his force into four groups of varying strength and directed the largest group under Ananta Singh and Ganesh Ghosh to attack the Chittagong armoury,<sup>26</sup> while the other three smaller groups attacked respectively the auxiliary force armoury, the telephone and telegraph offices, and the European club. The group attacking the club was supposed to massacre any Europeans found therein, but since it was Easter, the club was practically deserted. The other three groups carried out their objectives successfully. They stormed the two armouries, shot down the sentries, and looted the arms. The telephone exchange was wrecked and set on fire, but the raiders were driven from the telegraph office before it could be destroyed. Meanwhile other terrorists cut down the telegraph lines and removed a rail from the train tracks in an attempt to sever all means of communications. The British, however, were able to send news of the raid by radio from a ship in Chittagong harbor.

Apparently the terrorists had plans to raid the Government treasury and to massacre all Europeans in the city, but before these objectives could be carried out, the police mounted a counter-attack and drove the raiders from the city. The terrorists were in control of parts of the city for only a few hours. But during that time they had immobilized the most vital centers, namely the transportation, communications, and stores of arms. They also established in name if not in substance a provisional revolutionary government under the presidency of Surya Sen.<sup>27</sup>

But in spite of their relatively large numbers and the surprise of their attack, the terrorists could not hold the city for more than a few hours. They faced some insuperable problems

and they made a number of mistakes. For instance, in looting the auxiliary force armoury, they took the weapons but neglected to take ammunition. Also there was another armoury in the city which the terrorists did not attack. Finally, they could not prevent news of the uprising from being radioed.

Under the police counterattack, the raiders fled into the surrounding hill. The police did not pursue them until after Gurkha reinforcements had arrived on April 20. For some reason, the raiders chose not to effect their escape from the area, which it seems they could have done. On April 22 the raiders found themselves surrounded on three sides on Jalalabad Hill, only three miles from Chittagong. The police and the Gurkha reinforcements fought a two-and-a-half hour battle, but eventually retired from the scene without taking the hill. The next morning, the Government occupied the hill unopposed and found ten dead bodies and two mortally wounded terrorists. The remainder had escaped. Some of the veterans of the raid and the fight on Jalalabad Hill remained at large for as long as three years before being captured. Surya Sen, for instance, was not arrested until May 1933. During the course of these next few years, the Chittagong raiders were responsible for a chain of other terrorist murders and other outrages.

The news of this raid caused a wave of enthusiasm among the young terrorists. The old *dadas* were still urging caution and restraint while the parties built up strength, but the "revolt" group could no longer be held back.<sup>28</sup> During the next three years, a series of assassinations of Europeans was carried out which caused British officials in Bengal, for the first time in the history of the terrorist movement, to fear for their lives.

India as a whole was in a general state of excitement due to the Civil Disobedience Movement. As in the first mass movement in the early 1920's, young boys were dropping out of Government-sponsored schools. Again as in the 1920's, many of these youth joined the terrorist parties. But unlike the 1920's, the terrorist parties did not quietly await the results of Gandhian tactics. The non-violent Civil Disobedience Movement and the violent terrorist movement proceeded simultaneously. Although Gandhi was arrested on May 5, the Civil Disobedience Movement continued and by the end of June, 60,000 persons were in jail, most

of them serving six-month terms for symbolic violation of the law.

After the April Chittagong raid, the youth in all the terrorist parties demanded action. In May, the main Calcutta Jugantar party drew up an ambitious program for major acts of terror, including,

- (1) The murder of Europeans in hotels, clubs, and cinemas, simultaneously in Calcutta and the districts by bombs.
- (2) The burning of the aerodrome in Dum-Dum [the airport serving Calcutta] with petrol.
- (3) The cutting off of the gas and electric supply of Calcutta by destroying the gas works and the electric power stations.
- (4) The cutting off of the petrol supply of Calcutta by destroying the depot at Budge-Budge.
- (5) The disorganization of the tramway service in Calcutta by cutting overhead wires.
- (6) The destruction of telegraphic communication between Calcutta and the districts in Bengal.
- (7) The destruction of bridges and railway lines by dynamite and hand grenades.<sup>29</sup>

Only the first item of this program was carried out, and that only to a limited degree. Jugantar made its first move on August 25, 1930. Anuja Sen and Dinesh Chandra Majumdar stood on opposite sides of the street at Dalhousie Square in Calcutta and threw bombs at the passing car of Commissioner of Police, Charles Tegart. Tegart must have led a charmed life. In two previous attempts on his life, the terrorists had shot at the wrong person. This time the bombs missed his car and hit the two terrorists instead, killing Sen almost immediately and seriously wounding Majumdar.<sup>30</sup> The two terrorists appear stupid to have stood exactly opposite facing each other, but perhaps they purposely planned it that way. Later the same day, Calcutta police arrested Narayan Chandra Ray, a medical doctor and also a councillor in the Calcutta Corporation, who was in charge of bomb-making for Jugantar. Ray and Majumdar were brought to trial in the so-called Dalhousie Square Bomb Case and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.<sup>31</sup>

According to police information, the killing of Tegart was to be the signal for all Jugantar groups to carry out an extensive



series of terrorist murders and bombings. Three outrages did occur in rapid succession. The Bengal Volunteers were responsible for one of these, but by this time, BV and Jugantar were cooperating very closely.<sup>12</sup> The day following the attempt on Tegart a bomb exploded in front of a police station in Calcutta injuring three passers-by. On August 27, another police sub-station in Calcutta was bombed, injuring one policeman and two other persons. And on August 29 in Dacca, Benoy Krishna Bose of BV shot and fatally injured the Inspector-General of Police, Mr. F. J. Lowman, and seriously wounded the Dacca Superintendent of Police, Mr. Hodson.<sup>13</sup> The next act in the bloody series of outrages came in December and was directed against the new Inspector of Police. However, the assassins, both absconders from the Chittagong Raid, shot and killed an Indian railway official by mistake.<sup>14</sup>

One week after this incident, the Bengal Volunteers struck again, and Benoy Krishna Bose, the killer of Lowman, was again involved. On December 8, 1930, Bose, along with Sudhir Gupta and Dinesh Gupta, entered the Writers' Building in Calcutta and fatally shot the Inspector General of Prisons, Colonel Simpson. The three terrorists then went down the hall firing indiscriminately into offices and wounding two other European members of the Indian Civil Service. The terrorists were finally cornered, whereupon they attempted suicide. Sudhir Gupta died immediately and Bose died a few days later. Only Dinesh Gupta survived to stand trial and eventually execution.

The Writers' Building raid brought the bloody year 1930 to a close. Eleven British officials had been killed and twelve injured as a result of terrorist activity. In addition, ten non-officials were killed and fourteen injured. The terrorist casualties were even greater, with twenty-six killed and four injured.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the police had placed 454 terrorists under preventive detention under a new Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act.<sup>36</sup>

#### BRITISH ATTEMPTS TO SUPPRESS THE OUTBREAK

After the Chittagong Raid, the Government did not delay in enacting emergency legislation to deal with this revival of terrorism in Bengal. The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1925 had expired March 21, 1930. Under the prompting of the Bengal police, on April 1, those sections of the Act which provided for

trial by special procedure were re-enacted as the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment (Part Continuance) Act of 1930. Actually, the police desired that the entire Act of 1925 be re-enacted as permanent legislation. One of the arguments used by the Calcutta Commissioner of Police in urging continuation of the 1925 powers was that "it would . . . strengthen the hands of veteran revolutionaries, whose motto appeared to be 'no violence for the present', against the younger firebrands"<sup>37</sup> Obviously the police were aware of and were quite concerned about the revolt groups.

The very day after the Chittagong Raid, the powers of arrest and detention were re-conferred by ordinance. In October, at the end of the six-month life of the ordinance, the Legislative Assembly passed the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1930 which gave to the Bengal Government, again for a five-year period, the same powers as contained in the 1925 Act.<sup>38</sup> With these powers in hand, the Government, by the end of 1930, had arrested a number of leaders from all parties. Although the Government considered that these preventive arrests had forestalled the recurrence of any major outrages such as the Chittagong Raid, the Government was disturbed that the terrorist organizations were still intact, and that "anti-British sentiment and a spirit of lawlessness" aroused in speeches and in the press during the course of Gandhi's Civil Disobedience Movement was contributing to the strength of the terrorist movement in spite of the formal disavowal of violence by the Congress Party.<sup>39</sup>

However, the Bengal Government was at this time reluctant to demand further special powers, such as a new press act, because of conditions on the national scene. The Government of India was anxious to come to some accommodation with the Congress Party. A series of talks between Gandhi and Lord Irwin, February 17 to March 4, 1931, resulted in an agreement by which the Civil Disobedience Movement was ended, all political prisoners except those convicted of crimes of violence were released, and the Congress was to be represented at the second session of the Round Table Conference. In order not to risk upsetting the Gandhi-Irwin truce, the Government of Bengal at this time did not press for further special powers.<sup>40</sup>

The younger terrorists, of course, were uninterested in the Gandhi-Irwin talks or the Round Table Conference. However, some of them were angry that Gandhi had not insisted that

terrorist prisoners be released as well as Civil Disobedience prisoners. And some were disturbed that Gandhi was making deals with the very same Government which had been responsible for executing so many terrorists.<sup>41</sup> A little more than a month after the talks ended, the terrorists struck again. On April 7, 1931, Bimal Das Gupta and Joti Jiban Ghosh of BV shot and killed Mr. James Peddie, District Magistrate of Midnapore. Both assassins escaped and one of them, Das Gupta, later participated in another terrorist attack in Calcutta. This Midnapore assassination was more than just another isolated terrorist act, for the BV also murdered the next two British District Magistrates sent to Midnapore.<sup>42</sup>

While Gandhi was preparing to leave India to attend the second session of the Round Table Conference in London, the terrorists continued their assault. In Alipore on April 27, 1930, Kanailal Bhattacharya, whose party affiliation was never determined, shot and killed R. R. Garlick, a judge who had recently sentenced two terrorists to death. Bhattacharya was shot and killed on the scene.<sup>43</sup>

By the end of July 1931, the Bengal Government concluded that existing special powers were inadequate to deal with the terrorist situation. The Government was particularly disturbed about alleged incitement to violence in the Bengali press.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, in apparent disregard of possible effects on the Round Table Conference, which began its second session on September 7, the Government of India asked for and enacted the so-called Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act on October 9. This Act gave the Government of India almost arbitrary powers to suppress any publication which it deemed subversive.<sup>45</sup> In addition, on October 29, Ordinance IX was promulgated by the Government of India, including within the categories of persons who could be placed under preventive detention not only those conspiring to carry out acts of terror, but also any member of a terrorist party or anyone who had aided terrorist associations in any way.<sup>46</sup> Finally, on November 30, the Bengal Emergency Powers Ordinance was promulgated giving the Government far-reaching powers. This Ordinance was "aimed at crushing terrorism and restoring the prestige of Government and the morale of its servants in those parts of Bengal where the danger was greatest," specifically, Chittagong.<sup>47</sup> Undoubtedly this Ordinance was inspired in part

by another recent outrage in Chittagong: a Bengali Inspector of Police, who had been deeply involved in investigating and preparing the brief for the Chittagong Raid Case was murdered by a young boy under orders from Surya Sen.<sup>48</sup> The Bengal Emergency Powers Ordinance gave the Government authority to combine police and military action to round up terrorists in the district of Chittagong. Also the District Magistrate was given extensive powers "to commandeer property, to limit access to certain places, to regulate traffic and transport, and to impose a collective fine upon recalcitrant inhabitants."<sup>49</sup> Other parts of the Ordinance applied to the whole of Bengal and, as usual, provided for trial of terrorists by special tribunals.

The severity of this Ordinance, particularly the provision for use of military forces and the provision empowering the District Magistrate to impose collective fines, suggests a sense of desperation on the part of the Bengal Government. Not only British officials, but the entire European community in Bengal was becoming highly alarmed, for murderous assault was not confined to officials. On October 29, 1931, Bimal Das Gupta of BV, one of the two assassins of Peddie, attempted to assassinate Mr. Villiers, a British businessman and president of the Calcutta European Association. The same afternoon, a group of Europeans calling themselves the "Royalists" circulated a leaflet demanding action to crush what they called "Congress terrorism."<sup>50</sup>

Bengali writers invariably tend to exaggerate the fear and cowardice of British officials in India. However, there may be some element of truth in B. K. Rakshit-Roy's statement that in the early 1930's, British officials in Bengal turned their quarters into "small forts," surrounded by barbed wire and heavily guarded by sentries.<sup>51</sup> Some evidence of fear on the part of British officials is contained in Home Department records, as for example the following passage in a letter written late in 1931 by the Home Secretary :

Although the Services, especially the Imperial Police, have stood up to the strain remarkably well, it will be idle to pretend that the strain is not having its effect. It may be illustrated by the warning which a senior Judge gave . . . that if he were put on the tribunal which is to try Peddie's murderer he would leave the country as soon as the trial

was over, with leave if he could get it, or without if he could not . . . .<sup>52</sup>

And still further evidence is contained in the following portion of a memorandum from the Director of the Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department :

The steady toll of sacrifice is bound soon to affect the morale of the security services and it is a wonder that it has not done more in this direction already. The members are living in a state of war with emoluments determined for a state of peace. The temptation for a man with a family to go while the going is good must be enormous.<sup>53</sup>

Although the statement that officials were "living in a state of war" may have been an exaggeration, there can be no doubt that the British in Bengal were frightened and that the morale of the services was breaking down.

#### WOMEN TERRORISTS AND THE CONTINUATION OF VIOLENCE

A new element in the terrorist movement appeared toward the end of 1931. Women terrorists began engaging in murderous assault. Women had not been particularly prominent in the first Gandhi-led mass movement, but during the second movement in the 1930's, large numbers of women openly participated, were arrested, and went to prison along with the men. Though not actually carrying out terrorist acts, women had become involved in the terrorist movement in the mid-1920's in Dacca through association with the Deepali Sangha and the Shree Sangha and in Calcutta through college groups, some of which were connected with Shree Sangha.<sup>54</sup> Bethune College in Calcutta in particular was a centre of radical feminist agitation. In the 1928 Calcutta session of Congress, young women participated as volunteer workers for the first time in Congress history. Under the leadership of Oxford-educated Latika Ghosh, niece of Aurobindo, approximately one hundred girl students joined the Congress Volunteers, participated in the military drill, and worked side by side with their male counterparts, many of whom were terrorists.<sup>55</sup> Although Bengal police kept a close watch on the activities of these girls, the Government was reluctant to bring them under preventive detention without lodging some

specific charge against them.<sup>56</sup> This reluctance ended abruptly in the early 1930's when women began to take active parts in both the Civil Disobedience Movement and the terrorist movement.

On December 14, 1931, two teen-age girls connected with the Shree Sangha fatally shot C. G. B. Stevens, Magistrate of Comilla.<sup>57</sup> Following this assassination, the Bengal police quickly moved to arrest a few women suspected of complicity with the terrorists, including Leela Nag, co-leader of the Shree Sangha.<sup>58</sup>

In terms of blood, the year 1931 was not so violent as the previous year had been. The British counted five officials killed and thirteen injured, four non-officials killed and three injured, one terrorist injured and none killed.<sup>59</sup> A total of 452 persons were dealt with during the year under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1930.<sup>60</sup> By the end of the year, the Government could be cautiously optimistic. The Secretary of State later reported,

Though the situation at the end of 1931 was far from reassuring, the police were again armed with adequate powers. Civil disobedience was waning and they were, therefore, free to devote all their energies to the suppression of terrorism.<sup>61</sup>

In 1932, as the time limit on the Ordinances expired, equivalent powers were re-conferred by a series of enactments in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. But unlike the Government's experience in the 1924-1925 period, emergency legislation did not bring an end to the terrorist movement.

Gandhi arrived back in India on December 28, after the the breakdown of the second session of the Round Table Conference. Within five days of his return, the Civil Disobedience Movement was resumed and within eight days Gandhi was back in jail. The first spectacular terrorist act of the new year did not come until April 30. Prodyot Kumar Bhattacharya and Probhansu Pal of BV murdered Robert Douglas, Peddie's successor as District Magistrate of Midnapore. Pal escaped, but Bhattacharya was captured on the scene and eventually executed.<sup>62</sup>

The Civil Disobedience Movement, after an initial surge of mass support in the spring of 1932, was losing its impetus by the summer, but the terrorist movement actually picked up

momentum during the summer and early autumn. In July, E. B. Ellison, Superintendent of Police at Comilla, was shot by an unknown terrorist, probably a member of BV.<sup>63</sup> In August, Atul Kumar Sen, whose party affiliation is unknown, attempted to assassinate Alfred Watson, the editor of the Calcutta newspaper, *The Statesman*. Watson escaped injury. Sen was captured immediately, but took poison and died on the scene. A second attempt was made on Watson's life in September, this time by four assailants. Watson was only slightly wounded. Of the four assassins, two took poison and died on the point of capture while the other two escaped.<sup>64</sup>

Chittagong had been relatively quiet for more than a year, but the terrorists were still hoping to succeed in their planned massacre of Europeans in the Chittagong club. In September 1932, another large-scale raid on the club was planned but had to be cancelled at the last moment due to the failure of Saileswar Chakraborti to make the rendezvous on time. Chakraborti had been in charge of the original raid on the club in 1930. Apparently he took full personal blame for the failure of these raids, for he committed suicide later in the night.<sup>65</sup> A third attempt on the club was made later in September, this time with success. About fifteen terrorists led by a girl, Pritilata Waddedar, attacked the club with bombs and pistols. About ten or twelve persons were injured and one elderly European woman was killed. The attack was carried out very swiftly and with complete surprise. All of the terrorists escaped except the leader, Waddedar, who took poison and dropped dead about a hundred yards from the club.<sup>66</sup> In the investigation and search following this attack, the police found pamphlets issued by an organization calling itself the "Indian Revolutionary Army." Among other things, these pamphlets called on the youth of the district to join the party and to kill Europeans and offered rewards for Europeans turned over to the party dead or alive.<sup>67</sup>

### THE DECLINE OF THE MOVEMENT

The raid on the Chittagong club was the last major outrage of the year 1932. The Government had reason for optimism that the terrorist movement was finally coming under control :

From the latter part of 1932, the tide began to turn, and between September 1932 and July 1933 the only murderous outrage which the terrorists could carry out in British India was the attempt on Mr. Luke,<sup>68</sup> though in French Chandernagore M. Quin [*sic.*], the French Commissioner of Police, was shot dead on the 10th March 1933.<sup>69</sup> Plot after plot was discovered and foiled, and one leader after another was captured. A stage has at last been reached when, in spite of dangerous conspiracies which every now and again come to light, the situation is definitely under control, so far as large-scale organized outrages are concerned. But there are a large number of individuals abroad who are prepared to commit or take part in isolated outrages and have apparently no difficulty in securing arms.<sup>70</sup>

The actual totals of killed and injured for the year 1932 were considerably higher than in 1931. The Government listed six officials killed and ten injured, six non-officials killed and twenty-seven injured, five terrorists killed and three injured.<sup>71</sup> The total of persons dealt with under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1930 was 927, more than the total of the two previous years combined.<sup>72</sup> However, the Government's optimism this time was well-founded, for the casualty totals for the following year, 1933, showed only one official killed and one injured and only two terrorists killed.<sup>73</sup> Arrests under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act dropped to 334.<sup>74</sup> Clearly the turning point had been reached in the fall of 1932.

The one spectacular murder of 1933 was the assassination of the third consecutive District Magistrate of Midnapore, B. E. J. Burge, on September 2 by two members of the BV. The assassins were shot on the scene, one dying immediately and the other the next day. A full-scale investigation followed this shooting, and as a result thirteen terrorists were brought to trial. Three were sentenced to death and four others to transportation for life.<sup>75</sup>

The Burge murder was really the last important successful terrorist outrage in India until the outbreak of World War II. In fact, there was only one other attempted outrage worthy of mention. The Bengali terrorists had on several occasions sought to assassinate the Governor of the province, John Anderson. In



1932, a girl, Bina Das, had shot at him during a convocation of Calcutta University. On another occasion, a plot to blow up the Governor's train had been successfully averted.<sup>76</sup> And finally, on May 9, 1934, at Lebong race track near Darjeeling, Bhabani Prasad Bhattacharya of BV and an accomplice shot at but missed the Governor.<sup>77</sup>

By the end of 1933, the police had dealt with 2,167 persons under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1930 and an additional twenty-one under Regulation III of 1818. Of these, 390 had been released unconditionally, six had died, and six were absconding. The remaining 1,786 were still, at the end of 1933, serving prison sentences, were in detention camps, in home or village domicile, or otherwise under restraint.<sup>78</sup> Not counted in these figures are all those terrorists who had committed suicide, been killed, executed, transported for life, or were serving prison sentences under ordinary criminal law.

#### THE CALCUTTA CORPORATION AND TERRORISM

Of great concern to the British during the early 1930's was the continued and increasing association of the Calcutta Corporation with terrorism and with the Congress nationalist movement. Since 1923 when popular Government was first permitted to Calcutta, the Corporation had hired numerous terrorists or suspected terrorists to serve in various capacities, principally as teachers in the Corporation primary schools. In 1923-1924 there were only nineteen such schools, but by the end of 1931, the Corporation, under Swarajist control, had increased the number to 225.<sup>79</sup> This seems a remarkable demonstration of the effectiveness of Indian control of the city, but what troubled the British was the vastly increased opportunities for hiring terrorists to fill teaching positions. The Government was equally concerned that large number of teachers took part in the 1930 Civil Disobedience campaign and arrested some for their activities. The police alleged that Corporation buildings were being used for Civil Disobedience purposes.<sup>80</sup>

In 1933, the Government introduced a bill in the Bengal Legislative Assembly which would disqualify any person who had been convicted of an offence against the state\* for appointment as an officer of the Corporation. To counter nationalist

argument against passage of this bill, the Government published a short pamphlet which enumerated instances of Corporation support for the terrorist and Civil Disobedience movements.<sup>81</sup> Among the cases cited in support of the terrorist movement were the following resolutions and other actions taken between September 1929 and July 1931 : the Corporation passed a resolution expressing sorrow at the death of Jatin Das, extended condolences to his family, and adjourned the Corporation for a day: appropriated money for a wreath for Das; resolved that a suitable memorial should be erected at the site of Das's cremation; participated in the celebration of Jatin Das Day; granted Dr. Narayan Chandra Ray, convicted in the Dalhousie Square Bomb Case, a six-month leave of absence and a further leave of four months "as his absence was due to causes which the Corporation considered sufficient to justify such absence"; expressed sorrow at the execution of Dinesh Chandra Gupta, convicted in the Writers' Building murder case, and adjourned the Corporation for a day.

In addition to these resolutions, the Government pamphlet cited three cases in which the Corporation had hired persons previously convicted of terrorist crimes and two cases of persons convicted while actually in the employ of the Corporation. Also there were sixty-one instances of employees dealt with under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act either before or during their employment with the Corporation.

As evidence of Corporation support of the Civil Disobedience movement, the pamphlet listed fourteen instances of resolutions and adjournments in protest against the arrest of important nationalist leaders. There were twenty-nine teachers in the Corporation free primary schools convicted in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement, and finally, the pamphlet cited cases of the Corporation free primary school teachers union passing resolutions of condolence on the death of terrorists and also union members participating actively in the Civil Disobedience movement.

To sum up its argument in favor of passage of the bill, the pamphlet concluded,

When you pass resolutions paying tribute to the courage and devotion of terrorists convicted of cold-blooded murder, pay your respectful homage and sincerest felicitations

to persons convicted of offences calculated to destroy the Government, grant leave with pay to persons convicted of conspiracy to murder to help them in their days of adversity, offer appointments as prizes for revolutionary and other subversive activity and allow your employees' unions to take part in them, will it delude anybody when you say that the Bill introduced by Government is unnecessary or unjust?<sup>82</sup>

Although a comprehensive account of terrorist outrages occurring between 1930 and 1934 has not been given, the relatively large sample considered here indicates the severity of the terrorist movement during these years. It will be noted that all terrorist outrages described here were committed by the Chittagong Raiders, the main Calcutta Jugantar, the BV, or the Shree Sangha. It has not been possible to identify a single major outrage committed by the Anushilan Samiti. The conclusion seems inescapable that Anushilan remained largely under the control of the cautious *dadas*. Perhaps the monolithic nature of Anushilan helped the *dadas* maintain control while the loosely connected Jugantar fell to the younger "revolt" groups. However, the younger Anushilan members did join with the "revolt" groups such as the Chittagong Raiders to carry out acts of terror, and members of all parties were placed under preventive detention.

It was in jails and detention camps in the early and mid-1930's that perhaps as many as fifty per cent of the terrorists converted to Marxism. Upon their release in the late 1930's these converted terrorists either joined the Communist Party of India or one of the other leftist parties which had come into existence in the 1930's. Those terrorists who did not convert to Marxism either joined Congress or dropped out of nationalist politics. In any case, the terrorist parties did not function effectively after about 1934 and were formally dissolved in the late 1930's.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CONVERSION OF TERRORISTS TO MARXISM

Marxism made its initial impact in India in the early 1920's when a number of Indian intellectuals, independently of each other, became aware of the Russian Revolution and its ideology. The subsequent development of the Communist Party of India (CPI), partly the work of the former terrorist M. N. Roy, was largely independent of the terrorist movement, although not unrelated to that movement. A detailed consideration of the origin and development of the CPI is beyond the scope of this study, yet a brief chronology of the CPI is necessary in order to place the terrorist conversion to Marxism in its proper perspective.

#### THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

The first open evidence of Marxist influence or inspiration in India appeared in the early 1920's, contemporaneous with the Non-Cooperation Movement. A few Indians, generally young, began to read about and then to write about the Russian Revolution and Marxism. These included such men as Muzaffar Ahmad and Kazi Nazrul Islam in Calcutta, Sripad Amrit Dange in Bombay, Ghulam Hussain in Lahore, and Singaravelu Chettiar in Madras. The major efforts these earliest adherents to Marxism were primarily directed toward propagating the new ideology rather than organizing parties. Initially they worked independently with little coordination or centralization.

M. N. Roy is credited with bringing these various individuals together, both ideologically and organizationally.<sup>1</sup> Roy, whose real name was Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, began his nationalist career in Bengal as a Jugantar terrorist and was deeply involved in the plot to secure arms from Germany during World War I.<sup>2</sup> When this attempt failed, Roy travelled to the United States where he was first exposed to Marxism. During this nationalist phase of his career, his major concern was how to take advantage of England's involvement in war with Germany. When the United States began putting pressure on the

Indian conspirators with Germany, Roy and his new American wife, Evelyn, fled to Mexico. There Roy came in contact with various Mexican and American leftists; and after the defeat of Germany ended all Indian schemes for securing arms for a revolution, Roy turned increasingly in a leftist direction.

In September 1919, while involved in an attempt to form a Mexican Socialist Party, Roy met Michael Borodin, an agent of the Comintern. Through Borodin, Roy was brought over to Marxism, perhaps not so much for ideological reasons as for the hope of Russian assistance in the Indian nationalist movement.<sup>1</sup> Roy eventually formed a small Communist Party of Mexico, and with a mandate from this group, he and his wife went to Moscow as delegates to the Second Congress of the Communist International. Roy soon won a position of prominence in the Communist International as the principal spokesman for India. Two years after the Second Congress, he became a candidate member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, and in 1924 he became a full voting member as well as a member of the Presidium.

Roy's position as Comintern spokesman for India did not go unchallenged. Competition for Comintern recognition was keen, for such recognition meant money, power, and prestige. The first serious challenge to Roy came from Virendranath Chattopadhyay, leader of the Indian émigré group in Berlin and brother of Sarojini Naidu, one of the most prominent women members of Congress. In June 1921, Chattopadhyay led a delegation of six from Berlin to Moscow. This group sought to gain the attention of the Comintern by presenting a new thesis on the political situation in India, but the Comintern saw fit to keep its confidence with Roy at least for the time being.

After the Second Congress, Roy journeyed to Tashkent to implement a plan to establish a Central Asiatic Bureau of the Comintern. A considerable number of Indian Muslim émigrés were then residing in Tashkent. Roy succeeded in converting some of these to Marxism and indeed organized the first Communist Party of India in October or November 1920.<sup>4</sup> A school was set up to give military training to these émigrés, but because of British protests to Russia and because Russia was then anxious to conclude a trade agreement with Great Britain, the school was closed within six or seven months. But at the same

time, in April 1921, a new school, the Communist University for the Toilers of the East, was established in Moscow.

M. R. Masani, a founder of the Congress Socialist Party, considered that organized communism first came to India when the products of the Moscow school filtered back to India.<sup>5</sup> However, nine of these returnees were arrested by British police at the border and, along with one other, were brought to trial in the Peshawar Communist Conspiracy Case in early 1923, charged with conspiring to deprive the King Emperor of his sovereignty in India. This became the first of three important conspiracy cases against the Communists in India. Of the ten accused, seven were convicted and imprisoned for one to two years.

Just as this case was nearing its conclusion, the Government of India arrested Shaukat Usmani,<sup>6</sup> Muzaffar Ahmad, and Ghulam Hussain. These three were not included in the nearly completed Peshawar proceedings, but were held under Regulation III and brought to trial the following year in the Cawnpore Case, the second of the conspiracy trials against the Communists.

Meanwhile Roy sought to develop a party base for himself back in India by sending Nalini Gupta to contact several of the local communist propagandists and the Bengal terrorists.<sup>7</sup> Shortly thereafter, in 1922, Roy went to Berlin to carry on propaganda work. The Comintern was apparently supplying him with ample funds, and Roy therefore began publishing a bi-monthly paper which, along with other propaganda material, he was able to smuggle into India.<sup>8</sup>

During 1923, the British intensified their pressure on the young communist movement in India by placing men like Dange under close surveillance and confiscating the literature Roy was sending from Europe. In early 1924 the Government brought conspiracy proceedings against eight of the propagandists who had been working closely with Roy. Charged in the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case were Roy, Nalini Gupta, Muzaffar Ahmad, Shaukat Usmani, S. A. Dange, Ghulam Hussain, R. C. L. Sharma (an agent of Roy in Pondicherry), and Singaravelu Chettiar. But of these eight, only four were actually brought to trial. Hussain became a witness for the state, Singaravelu was seriously ill, and Roy and Sharma were residing outside the jurisdiction of the British. The Government proved rather easily a conspiratorial

connection between the four remaining defendants, but the conspiracy evidently posed no serious threat to the state. Nevertheless the four were convicted and each sentenced to four years' imprisonment. By mid-1924, therefore, the Indian Communist effort had received a major setback through the imprisonment of its leading organizers in India and by having potential recruits scared off for fear of prosecution.

Although in 1924 Roy was elected to full membership on the Executive Committee of the Communist International, it was evident that his influence in the international Communist movement was beginning to wane. The Executive Committee passed a resolution calling for direct contact between the International and Communist groups in India, undercutting Roy's position as sole intermediary. Direct contact was not established, however. The Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) became the new link between the Comintern and the Indian Communists.<sup>9</sup> This ironic relationship, of course, left the Communists open to the criticism that they were employing the same imperial type of organization which they themselves so vigorously denounced.<sup>10</sup>

The Cawnpore Case proved to the Communists the necessity of having some open front organization to carry on legal activities. As early as 1923 Roy had suggested the creation of a Workers' and Peasants' Party, but the idea had not been accepted. By 1925, however, this type of organization seemed to be just what the Communists needed. The first organization in India to go under the name of "Workers' and Peasants' Party," however, was not originally formed by the Communists at all. In November 1925, a party calling itself the Labour Swaraj Party of the Indian National Congress was established in Bengal by a group of nationalists who were dissatisfied with both Congress and Swaraj Party leadership. Muzaffar Ahmad and Nalini Gupta, after early release from their sentences in the Cawnpore Case, became associated with this new party. At the first annual conference, February 1926, the name of the party was changed to Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal,<sup>11</sup> a constitution and plan of action were adopted, Muzaffar Ahmad became editor of the party organ, and Saumyendranath Tagore became a sectional secretary in charge of the workers' front.

Although the initial organization of this new party owed nothing to the inspiration of either Roy or the Comintern,<sup>12</sup>

young Indians of Marxist persuasion quickly came to control the party. At its second annual conference, Saumyendranath Tagore was elected General Secretary. Using this office as a base of support, in April 1927, Tagore travelled to Moscow, ostensibly to establish contact with the Comintern.<sup>13</sup> Undoubtedly his major aim was to undermine Roy's position and to win Comintern recognition for himself, for once in Moscow he made serious charges against Roy, particularly that Roy had grossly misrepresented the size of the communist movement in India and that he had misappropriated Comintern funds intended for organizational work in India.

In spite of these charges, Tagore failed in his bid for Comintern favour, and perhaps as a consequence of this failure, he soon developed serious ideological differences with Stalin. He remained in Europe for the next seven years, and on his return to India he organized his own independent communist group.<sup>14</sup> However, perhaps partly as a result of Tagore's revelations in Moscow, Roy's position in the Comintern was undermined and he was expelled in 1929. The major reason for his expulsion, however, was his alleged failure on a mission for the Comintern to China.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, other Workers' and Peasants' front organizations were being founded in other parts of India, some as a result of the activities of British Communist organizers who began coming to India in the mid-1920's, and on whom the favor of the Comintern now devolved. George Allison (alias Donald Campbell) came to India in 1926 and began working with the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, which had organized a subsidiary Bombay Labour Party. Although Allison was arrested in early 1927 and subsequently deported, his work was carried on by Philip Spratt, who had arrived in India with specific instructions to organize the Workers' and Peasants' Party as a legal cover for the Communists and to infiltrate the labour unions. Spratt was successful in getting the Bombay Labour Party reorganized as the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bombay in 1927. Toward the end of 1927 a similar party was organized in Punjab, and by the end of the next year, Spratt had organized a Workers' and Peasants' Party in the United Provinces.<sup>16</sup> At their third annual conference in March 1928, the Bengal Peasants' and Workers' Party changed its name to the



Workers' and Peasants' Party, thus reflecting the orthodox Communist theory concerning the primacy of the workers in the class struggle.

In December 1928, contemporaneous with the Calcutta session of Congress, all the leading Communists in India met and organized the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party. Ironically, unknown to the Communists in Calcutta, the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International (meeting in Moscow, July to September 1928) had just voted to liquidate Workers' and Peasants' Parties as legal fronts and to concentrate on building monolithic, illegal Communist parties.

Other than the émigré CPI in Tashkent, there was no organization in India calling itself the "Communist Party" until about 1924. Interestingly, it was organized by a man who insisted on no affiliation with the Comintern. Satya Bhakta, a man of Marxist persuasion in the United Provinces, had organized a small group in Cawnpore during 1924 which he called the Indian Communist Party. Contemporaneously with the 1925 session of Congress in Cawnpore, Bhakta convened a national conference of Communists. He undoubtedly expected to be able to control this meeting and to swing it to his "national" communist views. But the conference was attended by a majority of "orthodox" Communists from throughout India who were in direct or indirect contact with Roy. Bhakta quickly lost control of the meeting, and a party executive committee was elected which did not even include Bhakta. This, apparently, was the first Communist Party to be organized inside India. Although the anti-Bhakta, pro-Comintern faction had won control, the new party did not decide to seek Comintern affiliation until three years later when it met in Calcutta in December 1928.<sup>17</sup> This occurred at the same time that virtually the same group of Communists organized the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party.

Thus, by the end of 1928 there was a Comintern-affiliated Communist Party functioning in India, although with a rather limited membership. An All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party had also been established with about the same membership. But as has already been indicated, the Comintern had resolved to liquidate front organizations and to concentrate on building up communist parties in the colonial countries. The CPI had only a brief year in which to develop before all of its important leaders

were arrested in the late 1929 and brought to trial in the Meerut Conspiracy Case.

In the background of the Meerut trial was the very large increase in labour disputes and general industrial unrest during 1928-1929. More than a half million workers participated in over two hundred strikes resulting in the loss of more than thirty-one million working days.<sup>18</sup> Communists, particularly those in Bombay, were heavily involved in these strike activities, although it should be evident that the few Communists then in India could not have been responsible for the great majority of these industrial disturbances.

In response to this wave of industrial unrest, the Government of India took several specific actions. First, two bills were introduced in the Central Legislative Assembly, a Public Safety Bill which would empower the Government to deport foreign agitators, a measure obviously aimed at non-Indian Communists, and Trade Disputes Bill designed to limit the rights of labourers to strike. It will be recalled that the Assembly Bomb incident occurred in response to the Government's certifying these two bills. The second specific action of the Government was the arrest of thirty-one Communists and trade unionists on conspiracy charges. The resulting Meerut Conspiracy Case, begun in 1929, dragged on for three and a half years before judgments were finally handed down. The sentences ranged in terms from three to ten years, but most were reduced on appeal, and all the conspirators had been released by the end of 1933.

The CPI languished during the period from the end of 1929 to the end of 1933 while its principal leaders were in jail or under trial at Meerut, but the communist movement in general probably benefited from the propaganda value of the trial. According to Saumyendranath Tagore :

Nothing made so much propaganda in India for communism as did the Meerut conspiracy case. The entire attention of political India was focussed on the Meerut conspiracy case and hundreds of youths were drawn to the Communist Party because of it.<sup>19</sup>

Many terrorists, as will be demonstrated below, converted to Marxism during the very period of the Meerut trial as they bided their time in jails and camps under detention for their revolt group activities in the opening years of the 1930's.

## THE INTRODUCTION OF TERRORISTS TO MARXISM IN THE 1920'S

The Meerut Conspiracy trial touched only the major leaders of the communist movement in India, many of whom had not been directly or intimately associated with terrorism. However, during the 1920's, there were numerous other Indians, both terrorists and non-terrorists who were becoming acquainted with and converted to the principles of Marxism. These early converts, lesser figures in the movement though they may have been, were extremely significant to the later conversion of large numbers of terrorists in the detention camps in the early 1930's.

The British were not unaware that this subtle infusion of Marxist ideas was taking place among the terrorists. In the confidential report, *India and Communism*, an entire chapter was devoted to this connection between terrorists and communists. It was entitled, significantly, "A Dangerous Combination." As the following quotation shows, the British believed that the two movements were intimately connected from the very beginning.

It was when the first of Roy's and Chattopadhyaya's following began to drift back to India, the finished products of Moscow's infant Oriental Academy, that Communism first came to India. In the vanguard were Nalini Gupta and Abani Mukherji, who returned to India, the one of Roy's behalf in 1921 and the other in 1923 as an agent of Chattopadhyaya. Both had been members of terrorist organisations in Bengal prior to their departure abroad and both were sent back as Communist emissaries to renew their old acquaintances and to seek from amongst them recruits to their new "ideology."<sup>20</sup>

Abani Mukherji had been associated with Roy in Bengal prior to World War I and had gone to Japan at about the time Roy made his first trip to Java. He later accompanied Roy to Moscow and to Tashkent. When Roy returned to Moscow in early 1921, Mukherji was left in charge of the Tashkent school.

Mukherji and Roy met again in Berlin in the spring of 1922, but parted company from that point on. Mukherji joined the Chattopadhyaya group and spent the next several years seeking to undermine Roy's position in the Comintern.<sup>21</sup> The important phase of Mukherji's work as far as the terrorist movement was concerned was his visit to India in 1923-1924, and his

contact with the Anushilan Samiti, which offered him shelter during his stay in Dacca. Apparently he had some influence on at least two Samiti members. Santosh Kumar Mitra and Satish Pakrashi, both of whom became early proponents of Marxism within the Samiti.

According to Pakrashi, at the time of Mukherji's visit, the leaders of the Samiti were not at all interested in Marxism, the Comintern, or political relations with Russia. Nor were they interested in Mukherji's suggestion that they organize the Indian workers and peasants. They were concerned only with getting arms from whatever source they could but the Samiti leaders soon discovered that Russia was more concerned with supplying propaganda literature and printing presses than weapons. Since the Indian terrorists of those days had no clear conception of mass revolution, they showed little enthusiasm for that kind of help. Pakrashi, rather astutely it seems, interpreted Mukherji's efforts among the Anushilan as an attempt to build a base of support with an Indian revolutionary party in order to strengthen himself in his rivalry with Roy.<sup>22</sup>

Nalini Gupta, as an agent of Roy, may have been somewhat more effective than Mukherji in spreading Marxism among the Anushilan terrorists.<sup>23</sup> He made two trips to India, first in 1921-1922 and again in 1923. On the second occasion he was arrested and convicted in the Cawnpore Case. But due to ill health, he was released early and subsequently became associated with the Bengal Workers' and Peasants' Party.

During his first visit, he recruited at least two Anushilan members, Gopendra Chakravarty and Jatin Mitra and sent them to Europe to study communism.<sup>24</sup> Mitra went to Germany briefly and returned in 1925 as Roy's agent in the Anushilan, but for reasons that are not clear, Roy criticized his work in Bengal and broke off their relationship. Chakravarty returned to India in June 1925, and as a result of his activities among Calcutta Anushilan members, several attempts were made by the party to send other emissaries abroad to establish contact with European Communists. Of the five or six persons who were to be sent by the Samiti only one, Akshoy Kumar Saha, actually succeeded in getting out of India. But Saha did not perform as expected, for he settled down in Leningrad and did not return to India until 1932.<sup>25</sup>

More important than these attempts to send emissaries abroad were Chakravarty's propagandizing efforts among Anushilan members in Calcutta. By early 1926 he had succeeded in winning over some of the party leadership to a new program which included, among other things, provisions for organizing

(1) among students, who were to form unions and agitate to obtain control of the educational system;

(2) among labourers and peasants, who were to be educated in accordance with the usual Communist programme,

. . . co-operative banks being opened for the general benefit;

(3) in the Congress, which was to be used by members of the party as a cloak for their terrorist activities;

(4) on military lines, which included the formation of volunteer corps and athletic clubs to further military training and, also, agitation for the Indianisation of the army.<sup>26</sup>

According to British Intelligence, student associations and co-operative banks were in fact established in accordance with this program. Strangely, *India and Communism* interpreted the organization of the Congress Volunteers to be further evidence of the implementation of this program.

It is to be noted that Chakravarty's program did not call for collection of arms or the commission of individual acts of terror. The Government considered this to be evidence that Chakravarty was following orthodox Communist ideology, which clearly deprecated individual terrorist acts and encouraged instead arousing the masses to class struggle. British Intelligence did not make clear which or how many leaders of the Samiti approved of this plan. Undoubtedly, very few of the elder leaders of the party were willing to go along with Chakravarty's Communist program, although they may have been interested in seeking outside aid from the Comintern.

Chakravarty did have some success in converting a few of the young Anushilan members to Marxism. British Intelligence noted especially Dharani Mohan Goswami, who, in 1926, became closely associated with Chakravarty and

became a convert to Bolshevism, and of so high an order was his Communist evangelism that several of the younger members of the Party who came under his influence were impelled [toward the end of 1926] to break away from their

old leaders, who, while they were quite ready to receive assistance from the Comintern, were not prepared to adopt all the tenets of Communist theory.<sup>27</sup>

Once again, there is no indication of the magnitude of this defection, but in all probability Goswami's followers were quite few in number. However, his group subsequently became immersed in the activities of the Workers' and Peasants' Party and was able to obtain as many as seven seats on the executive council of that party.

British Intelligence regarded Goswami's conversion to Communism as

a landmark in the history of terrorism in Bengal. From the end of 1926 onwards the penetration of terrorist bodies went steadily on, side by side with the organisation of those whose violent inclinations were of a less impulsive kind, who preferred to await the day when an armed mass rebellion was more possible of attainment.<sup>28</sup>

As supporting evidence for this latter assertion, Intelligence cited the formation of the Workers' and Peasants' Parties, the organization in 1928 of a Socialist Youth League under the leadership of Santosh Mitra, who, it will be recalled, had been recruited by Abani Mukherji; the organization toward the end of 1928 of a Young Comrades' League headed by Dharani Goswami and which included a large number of terrorists; and the organization about 1930 of the Samyraj Party which consisted at first entirely of members of the old HSRA but later attracted members from other Calcutta terrorist groups.<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile, independently of these organizing efforts by active propagandists of Marxism, other individual terrorists were learning and adopting Marxist ideas in their own separate ways. Satish Pakrashi, whose name has been mentioned frequently in the preceding chapter in connection with revolt group activities, gave a very revealing report of his own conversion. His first exposure to Marxism came in the mid-1920's while in Midnapore detention camp. He was made aware of the Russian Revolution, not by reading works of Communists, but through the writings of such persons as Bertrand Russell, G. D. H. Cole, and H. N. Brailsford. Like Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, Pakrashi also read the monthly, *Nineteenth Century and after*

although he regarded it as very conservative and as giving a very distorted idea of communism.<sup>30</sup>

While in Alipore Jail, probably about 1926, Pakrashi became aware of the publications of the Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal, which openly preached Communism and praised the Russian Revolution. He also learned that Gopen Chakravarty and Dharani Goswami were trying to introduce Marxist ideas into the Anushilan Samiti and were urging the adoption of a program which would attract the masses to the cause. Pakrashi reported that at the time, he could not understand why anyone would seek to organize the workers and peasants rather than collect arms for terrorist activities. He was, at that time, absolutely loyal to his party *dadas* and belittled the efforts of the Communist propagandists. From Alipore Jail, Pakrashi was sent to Belgaon Jail in Karnatak and subsequently to Yervada. At the latter prison he met George Allison, a member of the CPGB who had been imprisoned for entering India on a false passport. Allison impressed on Pakrashi the necessity for arousing the masses and emphasized that India would never become free by "spinning the *charkka*."<sup>31</sup> After his release from detention, Pakrashi returned to Calcutta and took part in the 1928 session of Congress. He reported that abundant Marxist, Trotskyite, and some anti-Marxist literature was distributed at that session. Some of the pro-Marxist literature, especially Bukharin's *A B C of Communism*, became highly popular with some of the younger terrorists. Pakrashi also attended the first congress of the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party and was surprised to find some of his old comrades, such as Dharani Goswami, on the rostrum. The speakers at this meeting emphasized organizing the workers and peasants and launching a great class struggle; but they also criticized the terrorists as henchmen of the bourgeois.<sup>32</sup>

Further, Pakrashi was impressed by the wave of strikes in 1928 and especially by the active interest that students were beginning to take in working class movements. These facts caused Pakrashi and other terrorists to rethink their position concerning students and the role of working and peasant classes. Up until that time (1928) the terrorists had not given much consideration to the working classes, although large numbers of students had always been under the influence of the terrorist

parties. Now Communists were beginning to have more influence among the students and the students themselves were taking an interest in the working classes.<sup>33</sup>

Here Pakrashi has provided an extremely important insight into what was probably an important consideration in the conversion of some terrorists to Marxism : the terrorists were losing control of the students to the Communists and therefore, in order to maintain their position among the students, the terrorists had to follow suit by adopting the ideology that was becoming attractive to the students. The terrorists of the 1920's had neither a clear conception of how to accomplish their goal nor an accepted conception of what their goal was other than the ending of British imperialism in India. They had no idea of what the future independent Indian state should be. Communism filled this ideological void for many young Bengalis, both terrorist and non-terrorist.

Narain Bannerji, cited frequently above in connection with revolt group activities, was another terrorist who gave a clear report of his introduction to Marxism in the 1920's. Bannerji indicated that his first exposure to communism came, ironically, from reading the secret Government report, *Communism in India*.<sup>34</sup> But perhaps more important early sources of information for Bannerji were the writings of certain Westerners who were sympathetic with the Soviet cause. *The Modern Review*, published in Calcutta, frequently reprinted writings of such persons as Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Maurice Hindus, and Zelda Courts. Also influential on Bannerji's thinking was a report of the success of the first Five Year Plan in Russia published in a special supplement of the London *Economist*. At the time he was reading this report, Bannerji noted, the capitalist world was sunk in the midst of the Great Depression, and for him this had the effect of magnifying the Soviet achievement all the more. By 1930 Bannerji had begun to publish his own leftist ideas. He wrote a small pamphlet in Bengali on the Indian working classes entitled *Shree Bhaut* (The Great Hoax). It was soon proscribed by the Government, and Bannerji was arrested in November 1930 and placed under detention.<sup>35</sup> In jails and camps during the next few years, he continued his reading and study of Marxism and soon was leading study groups among other terrorists in the new ideology.



The experiences of Pakrashi and Bannerji, narrated here in some detail, were probably typical of a number of other younger revolt group terrorists who made the conversion to Marxism in the 1920's. Their dissatisfaction with the old guard leadership of the terrorist parties and their concern to maintain influence among students, when coupled with the propagandizing activities of Roy and his agents, clearly facilitated their adoption of the new ideology. Pakrashi and Bannerji and others like them were later very significant to the conversion of large numbers of other terrorists in the detention camps in the early 1930's.<sup>36</sup>

#### THE CONVERSION TO MARXISM IN THE DETENTION CAMPS IN THE EARLY AND MID-1930's.<sup>37</sup>

Of the 2,167 persons dealt with under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1930, during the four-year period 1930-1933, a little more than half were confined in one of four detention camps: 477 in Berhampore, 150 in Buxar, 317 in Hijli, and 192 in Deoli. An additional 272 were confined in regular jails, 288 were held in home or village domicile, and 389 had been released.<sup>38</sup> Many of the actual convicts, especially those involved in the Chittagong Raid, were sent to the penal colony in the Andaman Islands. In these detention camps and jails and in the Andaman many of the terrorists made their conversion to Marxism or to some other variety of leftist ideology.

In order to understand the circumstances of their conversion, it is necessary to examine the conditions in the detention camps. In an interview with the author, Debajyoti Burman described the Berhampore Camp during the period 1932 to 1934.<sup>39</sup> Burman was about twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age and a degree candidate at Calcutta City College at the time of his arrest. He had been loosely associated with the Anushilan Samiti, but the occasion for his arrest was his independent publication of literature glorifying revolution. At Berhampore, Burman found a large number of other degree candidates among the terrorists, and therefore he and several other *detenus* made a proposal to the Government and to Calcutta University to permit degree examinations to be held inside the camps.<sup>40</sup> The

plan was accepted and so-called "non-collegiate" degree examinations were arranged with the cooperation of the University. Burman indicated that some two hundred students took their degrees in this manner during the time of his internment. This figure seems a bit exaggerated, but the fact that a large number of detenus did indeed complete their degrees while in jail gives a good indication of the social and intellectual classes from which the terrorists were drawn. Portions of this interview with Burman are confirmed in the serialized memoirs of Narain Bannerji. Bannerji wrote that many detenus appeared for their B.A. or M.A. examinations inside Berhampore camp and that most got record marks.<sup>41</sup>

Although laboratory and other physical equipment was lacking, the detenus apparently had little difficulty in obtaining whatever printed materials they needed. According to Burman's account, each prisoner was given a subsistence allowance of Rs. 2 per day and a further personal allowance of Rs. 15 per month. From this latter sum they were expected to buy their clothes, other necessities, and books. Also arrangements were made for the detenus to borrow books from outside circulating libraries; and in Berhampore, at least, there was a prison library. Burman's recollection of the amount of the monthly personal allowance may be slightly in error, or perhaps different allowances were established for different camps. In any case, in the Deoli camp the monthly allowance was Rs. 16. It is remarkable that of this amount, the prisoners in Deoli spent an average of Rs. 4 per month on books.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps they spent a larger percentage for books than detenus in other camps because Deoli had no prison library.

All books purchased or borrowed had to pass through a censor, but in practice censorship was remarkably lax. Burman reported that he was able to obtain special permission to get an English translation of *Mein Kampf*. Socialist and communist literature apparently came in freely without special permission. Burman recalled seeing copies of *Das Kapital*, Bukharin's *Leninism*, Markham's *History of Socialism*, and Laidlar's *History of Socialist Thought*.

The Bengal Government had no uniform policy regarding censorship of communist literature within the jails. And although the Government of India did have an explicit policy

regarding the importation of Communist literature into the country, even at the central level there was room for dispute about what could be permitted. By a notification of the Government of India dated September 10, 1932, issued under authority of the Sea Customs Act, all documents issued by or emanating from the Communist International or publications which contained substantial extracts from Comintern documents were ordered confiscated. As a consequence, the book *Bolshevism: Theory and Practice* was confiscated by customs officials in Bombay. Later the Intelligence Bureau cancelled the confiscation on the grounds that the book was a critical and analytical work on Bolshevism which could not be regarded as pro-Bolshevik propaganda.<sup>43</sup>

Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* was also confiscated but later released when a question was raised about the matter in Parliament.<sup>44</sup> Bukharin's *Historical Materialism* was confiscated by the Government of India after the Bengal Government examined the work and refused terrorist detenus permission to purchase it. Allen and Unwin Publishers protested the confiscation of *Historical Materialism* on the grounds that it was a "scholarly work." But in this case the Government of India held to its decision, in spite of the fact that Assistant Secretary R. T. Peel of India Office interceded on behalf of the publishers and requested the Government of India to reconsider the matter.<sup>45</sup> In response to this controversy, the Director of the Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department restated forcefully the Government of India's policy regarding Communist literature :

At the present moment in India all the leading Communists are urging the study of all books written by Communists on Communism and it is strange that Mr. Peel finds difficulty in telling Messrs Allen & Unwin that the Government of India are determined to do all in their power to stop the growth of revolutionary Communism in India, even if this necessitates stopping the sale of what a firm, making money out of Communist literature, is pleased to describe as a scholarly work.<sup>46</sup>

The India Office apparently developed the notion that there was no uniform procedure in India for dealing with Communist literature and apparently proposed that a separate notification

be issued for each objectionable work. But the Director of the Intelligence Bureau noted in a memorandum that there was indeed a uniform procedure :

The procedure is that new books or other literature noticed and suspected . . . to fall within the terms of the General Communist Notification dated September 10, 1932, are forwarded to this Bureau for opinion. In this Bureau a gazetted officer examines every such document with special reference to: (1) author and his connections, if any, with the Communist International, (2) publisher and his connections, if any, with the Communist International; and (3) substance, tone and obvious objects of the publication. Very often the case is perfectly simple, for (1), (2), and (3) above all show that the publication is intended to advance the main objective of the Communist International, which is to cause revolution in all Imperialist countries.

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The suggestion that a notification should be issued separately in respect of each objectional document, shows that the India Office has no idea of the extent to which efforts are made to flood this country with Communist literature.

\* \* \* \* \*

Actually, the only lack of uniform policy throughout India at present in this connection appears to be in Bengal. but . . . Bengal will possibly fall into line.<sup>47</sup>

The last sentence is significant. The Government of India had a definite policy and a procedure and yet still had difficulty making up its mind about specific Marxist works, a difficulty due in part to an apparent difference of view between Delhi and the India Office concerning the gravity of the situation. In Bengal there was no clearly formulated policy at all other than the very general one of investing the superintendent of the individual jail or camp with absolute authority to prohibit any book which in his opinion was unsuitable or objectionable, whether the book was proscribed by the Government of India or not.<sup>48</sup>

Evidently a very loose interpretation of what was unsuitable or objectionable was applied, for the detenus in Bengal had virtually free access to whatever materials they wanted.

Even books which prison censors did prohibit somehow found their way into the jails and camps. Burman suggested\* that some literature was smuggled in with the connivance of Indian prison guards and other officials. Narain Bannerji reported that a Sikh warder secretly brought several pamphlets into Presidency Jail at his request.<sup>49</sup> The Home Secretary described the generally lax conditions prevailing in the detention camps in the following terms :

The conditions in the detention camps at Hijli and Buxa are far from satisfactory... The detenus are given big allowances and are comparatively free from disciplinary control. Many of them live in greater comfort in the camps than in their own homes. It has been impossible to prevent communication between detenus inside the camps. So long as the chief leaders of the movement are kept in Bengal, the success of detention must be limited even if discipline is tightened up, and unless discipline is tightened up, the deterrent effect on the smaller fry must also be limited. The rules relating to detenus are in themselves sufficient to provide for discipline. The difficulty is in their operation. Unless the detenus are treated more or less as honoured guests, they give endless trouble, and the tendency, therefore, is to pander to them rather than to control them. A large part of the subordinate staff is unreliable.<sup>50</sup>

Further evidence of the same general conditions is provided by the following statement of a member of the Bengal Council :

As regards the Camps, Buxa is in charge of a very stout young Police boy who has done excellent work. He has used his disciplinary powers in the past, but I gathered from the I.G.P [Inspector General of Prisons] who had been up there recently that circumstances had compelled him to rule by humouring the detenus and not by strict discipline. We must have an Indian Subordinate Staff, and they are mostly sympathetic to the detenus or afraid of them. The Medical staff is honestly afraid of them, and in spite of frequent changes, it is probably true to say that in many cases the doctor's recommendations are dictated by the detenus. In spite of all the efforts of the Commandant communications pass in and out, and in too many

cases they pass through the staff or their relatives or employees.<sup>51</sup>

There seems little doubt that the detenus could send whatever messages they liked and receive whatever materials they desired.

But if these lax conditions did in fact prevail, then it may be legitimately asked why more escapes were not planned and carried out. Perhaps the detenus did indeed lead a more comfortable life in jail than outside and did not want to escape. In accounts of terrorists awaiting execution, it is frequently recorded with pride that the condemned prisoner actually gained weight prior to his execution. This is cited as evidence of the condemned man's courage and fearlessness in the face of death. However, it could equally well be cited as evidence that the prisoner was now better nourished, rested, and cared for than before his arrest. Perhaps a better explanation for the infrequency of escapes is that the terrorists gained a considerable amount of prestige merely by quietly remaining in prison, for going to jail was just as much a test of patriotism among the terrorists as it was among members of the Indian National Congress.

Out of their daily subsistence allowances, the detenus were expected to buy and prepare their own food.<sup>52</sup> Under these conditions, it was perhaps only natural that the detenus in the various camps organized into groups based on their party affiliation, pooled their daily allowances, ordered their supplies as a group, and had their meals prepared in separate kitchens. Thus in each camp there came to be an Anushilan kitchen and a Jugantar kitchen. The divisiveness which characterized the terrorist movement outside of jail was thereby perpetuated within the jails. Even the loose federated nature of Jugantar was reflected in the organization of the kitchens. The Jugantar kitchen at Berhampore, for instance, contained subgroups from a number of different localities, namely, Calcutta, Jessore-Khulna, Dacca, Comilla, Mymensingh, Barisal, Burdwan, and a large subgroup representing North Bengal. Also attached to the Jugantar kitchen in Berhampore were several groups which had operated more or less independently of the Jugantar federation prior to the mass arrests, such as the Shree Sangha and the Bengal Volunteers. Even though the Anushilan Samiti had always been a more tightly organized association, the Anushilan

kitchens in the camps also manifested subgroups based on locality. In Berhampore, for instance, the Anushilan kitchen 'had at least two large subgroups, one from Dacca and the other from Mymensingh.'<sup>1</sup>

It seems clearly evident that the individual terrorist identified more closely with his local subgroup than he did with the larger organizational entity. But the younger revolt group terrorists, as they were arrested and sent to the various camps and jails, were naturally not particularly eager to associate with their old *dadas* in the established kitchens of the two major parties. Therefore, what came to be known as the "third kitchens" soon developed in each camp and jail. These third kitchens were of quite diverse membership, being composed of revolt elements from both Anushilan and Jugantar, persons who had become interested in Marxism in the 1920's, and some persons who had been placed under detention even though they had not been associated with any terrorist party.

Those terrorists and others who already considered themselves communists seem to have emerged as the natural leaders in each of the third kitchens. Perhaps this was because, for the moment, only they had the necessary enthusiasm and a doctrine to preach. The revolt group terrorists were completely disheartened at their own failure in bringing about a large-scale revolution in the early 1930's, and their disenchantment with the course of the terrorist movement prior to 1930 has already been indicated. It seems clear that the initial attraction of the revolt elements to the third kitchens was due to their alienation from the leaders of the old parties and perhaps to the bankruptcy of their own ideology and the failure of their terrorist activities. Once in the third kitchens and subject to the influence of the ardent new communists, they eagerly adopted Marxist ideas. Study circles were organized in the kitchens for reading and discussing the easily available Marxist literature. These study circles were generally led by one or two persons who had become acquainted with and converted to Marxism in the 1920's, such as Narain Bannerji, whose early exposure to Marxism has already been described.

Bannerji has left a good description of his activities in the third kitchens of Presidency Jail and Berhampore Camp. When he arrived at Presidency Jail in 1931, the third kitchen there

contained thirty members and was managed by Nirmal Das, a young communist from Khulna.<sup>54</sup> Bannerji obtained a copy of Kropotkin's *Conquest of Bread* and translated it into Bengali. He reported that the work became very popular among many of the detenus.<sup>55</sup> Bannerji was next sent to Berhampore Detention Camp, which had a very good reading room and library. He had access to political quarterlies from London and other foreign journals. He liked especially a "progressive" publication from the United States called *Living Age*. He also found a book by Mussolini on fascism and read it thoroughly.<sup>56</sup> About 1933, Bannerji began holding classes on Marxism in Berhampore Camp, initially for two and later for four boys from the third kitchen. The first book he selected for study was Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Since this book was not in the prison library, Bannerji purchased it through normal prison channels. Next, Bannerji used Stalin's *Leninism*, a copy of which he did find in the prison library. He also translated this into Bengali, and manuscript copies were made by other detenus and circulated through the camp. In spite of the controversy over Bukharin's *Historical Materialism*, a copy somehow got inside the camp, was copied in longhand, and widely circulated in manuscript. Bannerji and some of the other detenus were able to procure copies of a new popular two-volume edition of *Capital* by convincing the prison censor that it was a work of pure economics.<sup>57</sup> *Capital* was later forbidden by orders of the Intelligence Bureau in Calcutta, but Bannerji was still permitted to keep his copies; and after he was transferred to village internment, he occupied his time by translating the work into Bengali.<sup>58</sup>

Later Bannerji started other study circles and attracted members from the North Bengal Jugantar group and some from Anushilan as well. Soon, almost all members of the third kitchens in Berhampore and other camps and jails were calling themselves communists. Significantly, even after their conversion to communism, the terrorists could not completely forget their old ties with their former parties. Thus the third kitchens came to have their own subgroups known as communists of "Jugantar mentality" and communists of "Anushilan mentality."<sup>59</sup>

Debajyoti Burman was in Berhampore at the same time



Bannerji was conducting the classes in communism. Although Burman remained hostile to communism, he was sufficiently interested to question some of the young converts about their attraction to the new ideology. They replied that they objected to the limited scope of Jugantar and Anushilan. They were not content with random acts of violence. They wanted a wider range of activities with more promise for the future. They needed an ideology. They wanted a program that promised to bring about the transformation of the Indian social order and the success of the five-year plans in Russia impressed them greatly.<sup>10</sup>

The activities of detenus like Bannerji did not escape the notice of Bengal Intelligence. Bannerji reported that on one occasion a detenu was taken to Calcutta for interrogation and that the first question the police inspector asked was how the classes in Marxism were coming along. Subsequently Bannerji heard rumours that he was to be transferred to Deoli Camp in Rajasthan because of his communist activities. He was, in fact, shortly transferred to village internment.<sup>11</sup>

Although the British were fully aware of what was happening in the jails and camps, they were unsure of the underlying reasons for this avid interest in Marxism other than a notion that somehow M. N. Roy was behind the movement :

Although there is no evidence that M. N. Roy established personal touch, during his brief sojourn in India in 1931, with any Bengali terrorists other than Subhas Bose and those who accompanied him to Karachi, yet it is a strange fact that it was not till then that his views began to find anything like general acceptance amongst members of the *Anushilan* and *Jugantar* Parties. Whether it was the result of Roy's influence or whether it was a more or less spontaneous reaction to current events it is difficult to say, but the early months of 1931 witnessed a remarkable manifestation of the Communist spirit amongst all classes of terrorists in Bengal. The change first expressed itself in a sudden thirst for knowledge of Communist theory and history on the part of *detenus* in the various jails and detention camps up and down the country wherever Bengali terrorists were confined. The leaders of both parties, *Jugantar* and *Anushilan*, lectured their following in

the jails. The demands for Communist literature exceeded all bounds, and when it was refused by the authorities it was smuggled in by sympathetic extraneous hands. Many of the messages which *detenus* carried (sometimes verbally, sometimes otherwise) from one jail to another emphasized the importance of spreading the doctrines of Communism amongst the rank and file. Some leaders there were who demurred, but as time went on their following decreased and they themselves fell into line. Thus, in a comparatively short space of time, a considerable number of known members of the *Anushilan* Party, and a fair number of the *Jugantar* also, had been weaned from ideas of individual terrorism to Moscow's doctrine of mass uprising at the appointed time, and a beginning had been made in placing them under trained Communist leadership. The process is still going on at the present time [end of 1934], and the full effect of this continuous instillation of Communist theories into callow minds already filled with racial hatred can only become apparent when the 2,500 Bengali terrorists now under detention begin to trickle back to their town and village homes.<sup>62</sup>

The fact that the British were completely aware of the conversions to Marxism and yet apparently took very little effective action to prevent the terrorists from access to Marxist literature has led some former terrorists to the erroneous conclusion that the British were actually encouraging them to study communism in order to divert them from terrorism.<sup>63</sup> However, there is ample evidence, including the above quotation, to show that the British, at all levels of the administration, were greatly disturbed by this growing interest in Marxism. For instance the "Note by the Secretary of State" ended with the following warning :

In conclusion, I would draw the attention of the committee to the relations, limited though they may be, which exist between terrorism and other subversive movements . . . It is unnecessary for me to do more than mention these tendencies; the dangers which have been and may be involved in such combinations are obvious.<sup>64</sup>

Ironically, if it was in fact British policy to subvert the terrorists by feeding them communist literature, then the policy

did succeed, for the terrorists, upon release from detention in the late 1930's, never again reorganized in their old form. Some dropped out of politics, others joined Congress. Many organized into new leftist political parties of their own, or they joined the CPI or one of the other leftist parties which had come into existence in the 1930's. Obviously not all of the terrorists became revolutionary communists, although perhaps as many as fifty per cent might have considered themselves converts to Marxism and there was a general tendency toward some variety of political leftism among virtually all of them. Clearly there was no unanimity of ideological thought.

The one terrorist group which demonstrated the greatest resistance to the doctrines of hard-core Marxist materialism was the Shree Sangha. Undoubtedly this was due to the great influence of their leader, Anil Roy, who beginning in the early 1930's developed a thoroughgoing pluralist interpretation of social dynamics. With rigorous logical consistency, Roy used this pluralist position as a basis to attack not only Marxian monism but what he considered Gandhi's monist insistence on non-violence.<sup>65</sup> Roy was especially disturbed that the new adherents to Marxism were departing radically from their traditional Indian values. Early in life, Roy had been considerably influenced by the teachings of Vivekananda, and he could never forsake the spiritual values inherent in Vedantism to adopt a frankly materialist ideology, even though he could agree with certain economic aspects of Marxism. Roy developed his own variety of socialism which he considered to be consistent with traditional Indian thought. This became the ideology of the majority of members of the Shree Sangha. Thus, although rigidly anti-Marxist, the terrorists in Shree Sangha also manifested the same general tendency toward political leftism.

THE ROY GROUP, THE CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY,  
THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE, AND  
THE LABOUR PARTY

When the converted terrorists came out of jail in the late 1930's, they found a variety of leftist parties already in existence in addition to the Communist Party of India. These parties had been founded in the early and mid-1930's by persons not

generally connected with the terrorist movement, but since many terrorists joined these parties, it is necessary to sketch briefly their early history.

The long quotation above from *India and Communism* indicated that M. N. Roy, after his expulsion from the Comintern, returned to India. Arriving in December 1930, Roy had only a few months' freedom before he was arrested (July 1931), with complicity in the 1924 Cawnpore Conspiracy, and sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment. However, during his seven months' freedom, he organized a small Marxist group from among Congress nationalists, presumably with the hope of being reinstated in the Comintern and having his group recognized as the official Communist Party of India.<sup>66</sup>

He failed to win Comintern recognition and of course, soon was in prison. The group which he organized continued as a non-Comintern communist party within the Indian National Congress. It was known as the "Roy Group" or the members called themselves simply "Royists." Undoubtedly when first organized, the Roy Group contained very few terrorists, since most were under detention. However, many Jugantar terrorists subsequently joined the Roy Group upon their release in the late 1930's.

Although organized within the Congress Party and lacking Comintern affiliation, the Roy Group was without question a Marxist party. As V. B. Karnik, one of the earliest adherents to the Roy Group, has expressed it :

The Royists and the official Communists represent essentially the same revolutionary ideology. As regards the fundamental principles of Communism, there are no differences.<sup>67</sup>

A second leftist party which took shape in the 1930's and which some terrorists subsequently joined was the Congress Socialist Party (CSP). The origin of the CSP is found in the discontent of many of the younger Congress nationalists with the program and leadership of the Congress Party, particularly with the lack of a sufficiently strong policy of social and economic reform to benefit the peasant and working class. Conceived in Nasik Road Central Prison by Congress political prisoners interned during the Civil Disobedience Movement, the new party took definite shape in 1934 after the general release

of political prisoners preceding the inauguration of the 1935 Constitution. Like the Roy Group, the CSP, as its name implies, was organized within the Congress Party. Ideologically the party included every shade of leftist opinion from the Marxism of Jayaprakash Narayan to the democratic socialism of M. R. Masani, both of whom were founders.

Terrorists were not initially attracted to the CSP, for although the party had been conceived in part due to discontent with Gandhi's leadership, the members of the CSP never entirely discarded the Gandhian ideal of non-violence. As Masani expressed it :

Without being able to formulate it, they were—despite their allegiance to Marxism—deeply and increasingly influenced by Gandhism. While, perhaps, intellectually they accepted the Leninist theory that “the end justifies the means,” temperamentally and secretly, honesty and purity of means attracted them. These temperamental differences were later on to develop into major barriers [to cooperation with the Communists].<sup>68</sup>

However, it is significant that those members of the Anushilan Samiti who converted to Marxism initially merged with the CSP before organizing the separate Revolutionary Socialist Party.<sup>69</sup>

Both the Roy Group and the CSP were all-India in scope, drawing their support not only from Bengal but from all provinces in India. However, there were two other parties which, although they may have claimed all-India status, tended in fact to be largely Bengal-based groups. The first of these was the Communist League, organized by Saumyendranath Tagore in 1934 after he returned to India from his seven years' sojourn in Europe. By this time Tagore was a bitter critic of Stalin and of what he considered the ultra-leftism of the CPI in the early 1930's. Undoubtedly his bitterness reflected his frustration at not being able to win Comintern recognition for himself.

The League was probably not composed of more than a handful of members for the first four years of its existence. A party organ was inaugurated called *Ganavani*, undoubtedly personally financed by Tagore, and in 1935 the Vanguard Club was organized among students by Bijan Datta, a former member of Anushilan, specifically as a recruiting front for the League.<sup>70</sup>

In 1938 the party held its first convention, and in the same year initiated a new illegal party organ called *Red Front*.<sup>71</sup>

Membership in the Communist League increased in 1938 and after, but these new members tended not to be former terrorists. Tagore reported that a few from Jugantar and Anushilan joined the League, but primarily support came from non-terrorist students.<sup>72</sup> Particularly important as a recruiting ground for the League was the All-India Students' Federation, an organization founded in the early 1930's as a forum for all left-leaning students.<sup>73</sup> According to Sudhindranath Kumar, the Student Federation could assemble as many as 50,000 students in the late 1930's.<sup>74</sup> In 1938 the Federation organized a campaign under Tagore's leadership to force release of political prisoners including terrorists, and undoubtedly through his association with the students in this campaign Tagore was able to attract many to the Communist League. Although Tagore apparently wanted to win support from the ranks of the terrorists through this campaign, for reasons that are not clear, only a few of the converted terrorists subsequently joined the League.

In 1941 at its third conference, the Communist League changed its name to the Communist Party of India and vigorously opposed supporting the British in the war effort while the "official" CPI favoured aiding the British after Hitler's attack on Russia.<sup>75</sup> Tagore's party participated in the 1942 Quit India Movement and at that time changed its name to the Revolutionary Communist Party of India (RCPI), no doubt to avoid any confusion with the CPI, which opposed the 1942 Movement.<sup>76</sup>

The second primarily Bengal-based leftist party was the small Labour Party organized in 1932, the leadership of which was assumed shortly after its founding by Niharendu Dutt-Mazumdar. Dutt-Mazumdar entered the nationalist movement in Bengal during the 1920 Non-Cooperation campaign. He was only fifteen or sixteen at the time, and he joined a small terrorist group in Mymensingh. He frankly stated that he did not know whether it was a Jugantar or Anushilan group and that he really did not understand what it was all about. However, joining such an organization was a romantic adventure to a boy of fifteen.<sup>77</sup>

Dutt-Mazumdar's political awakening came only after he

went to London as a law student. Although he already had some familiarity with Marxism, his real conversion came after hearing a labour agitator give a street-corner speech during a London strike in 1926. Significantly, Dutt-Mazumdar's activities after he returned to India were primarily directed at labour organization. In 1927 or 1928 he organized a small revolutionary group among Indian students in London and began a more serious study of Marxist literature. According to British Intelligence he became "a full and active member of the Communist Party of Great Britain."<sup>78</sup> But according to Dutt-Mazumdar himself, he always had serious quarrels with the CPGB especially because of the left-sectarian policy it was then advocating vis-a-vis the Indian National Congress. Nevertheless, the British regarded him as a major Communist organizer in London and considered that his activities were an attempt to carry out the resolution adopted by the CPGB in July 1930 to

work actively among the Indian residents in Britain (workers, sailors, students, *etc.*). and establish the best possible connexions with India through them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Persistent endeavours were made, mainly by Sakalatvala and Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar . . . to interest Indian students in the study of Communist theory. These efforts were rewarded in the summer of 1931 when a loosely-organised body known as the University Students' group came into being. Meetings were held at irregular intervals in Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar's house in London for the purpose of abstract discussions on Communism. The group was originally composed of a dozen members; all came of exceptionally good stock; all but two were of unimpeachable character prior to their leaving India, ten were Bengalis, and eight were related in one way or another to loyal servants of the Crown. Others who have joined the group subsequently are of the same mental and moral fibre and have the same family associations behind them. Their natural friends and associates both in India and at the English universities are numbered amongst those, who have entered or are about to enter the highest branches of the Indian services and the deliberate attempt to debauch these

young Indians before they reach the age of discretion is, therefore, the more subtle and the more dangerous.<sup>79</sup>

Some of those from the University Students' group were subsequently invited to a one-month's course on Marxism in Berlin. A few went to Berlin but after their return to India, only two became active communist propagandists and organizers. The rest apparently lost interest in Marxism after they took up remunerative employment in India.

According to British Intelligence, Dutt-Mazumdar, that "arch organiser," returned to India in August 1932 and "at once busied himself with 'rescue' work amongst those of his recruits who had fallen away since their return to India."<sup>80</sup> He worked not only in Bengal, but also toured the United Provinces, Delhi, the Punjab, and Bombay, and sent an agent to Madras. British Intelligence considered that the Labour Party in Bengal came into being in April 1933 as a direct result of Dutt-Mazumdar's organizing activities.<sup>81</sup> But according to Dutt-Mazumdar, he was not at all responsible for the initial founding of the Labour Party. Rather, it was founded in 1932 by Dr. Naresh Chandra Sen Gupta, who became its president, and Mrinal Kanti Bose, who left the party before the year was out. Dutt-Mazumdar joined in 1933 and the task of organizing the group fell to him.<sup>82</sup>

The major emphasis of the Labour Party under Dutt-Mazumdar's leadership was not so much the open propagation of communist ideology as it was the organization of the labouring classes in the Calcutta area. But British Intelligence considered these labour activities merely a cover for Dutt-Mazumdar's real intentions. According to *India and Communism*, the Labour Party

had as its inner aim the formation of labourers into militant Communist groups. As, however, the direct preaching of Communism carried with it risks which were quite incommensurate with the results likely to be obtained, the Party hid its real object behind a facade of legitimate trades-unionism and set itself the task of winning the confidence of the labouring classes in and around Calcutta by giving sympathetic attention to their daily grievances. Mazumdar was no lover of spectacular heroics for their own sake, and it would be time enough to introduce Com-



munist doctrines when a strong organisation had been built up by the above methods.<sup>83</sup>

Although the party sought to win support from among chemical workers, pottery workers, metal workers, jute workers, workers in match factories, and railwaymen, it had its greatest success in the Calcutta Port and Dock-workers' Union. A strike by this union begun in late 1934 resulted in Dutt-Mazumdar's arrest and imprisonment. He remained in jail for the next two years.<sup>84</sup>

Support for the Labour Party came primarily from students and labourers. Very few terrorists joined the party. The British, however, repeatedly expressed concern that overseas students, such as those who had been associated with Dutt-Mazumdar in London, and Bengali terrorists under detention would eventually unite on a communist program :

If only a small percentage of those who are recruited in London prove true to their training on their return to India, their number (and their mental and moral equipment) will still be adequate to the needs of the Communist situation, especially if their petty officers are drawn from amongst those 2,500 *detenus* who have already received a modicum of instruction in Bolshevik theory and practice and a good deal of experience of secret organisation on terrorist lines. Those recruited in London and those in Indian detention camps come from the same social strata and there are many signs that a number of the latter have joined hands with the former and are prepared to make common cause.<sup>85</sup>

By the late 1930's the left political spectrum in Bengal had been complicated by the proliferation of a number of Marxist parties: the CPI, the Roy Group, the CSP, the Communist League of Saumyendranath Tagore, and the Labour Party of Dutt-Mazumdar. Of these five, the first three were all-India in scope whereas the last two were based primarily in Bengal. Three were centered around individual personalities: Roy, Tagore, and Dutt-Mazumdar; and all except the CSP had been founded by or owed their inspiration to persons who had been involved in leftist activities abroad.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, there were in the jails and detention camps, both in and outside of Bengal, 2,167 terrorists, many of whom had become attracted to Marxism in the so-called third kitchens. The British were aware

of these developments and were greatly disturbed at the prospect of these terrorists joining forces with the Marxists. The British were further aware of the differences between the various leftist leaders and groups, but they tended to ignore the differences and to regard the activities of the CPI, the CPGB, Roy, Tagore, Dutt-Mazumdar, and even Chattopadhyay as all part of the same common conspiracy. As it developed, this was a grossly mistaken interpretation of the facts. The possibility of unity among the leftist parties was remote, and if anything, the Bengal terrorists were more divided after their conversion to Marxism than they had been as terrorists, and hence they constituted less of a threat to the British.

#### EARLY ATTEMPTS AT LEFT UNITY

From the moment of its inception in 1934, the CSP had proclaimed unity of all leftist parties to be one of its primary objectives.<sup>87</sup> Throughout the 1930's the Socialists sought to work out alliances and merger agreements not only with other leftist parties, but among the competing labour and peasant organizations as well.

On the political front, the first unity effort of the CSP was with the Roy Group. While Roy was in jail, the Roy Group in 1934 entered into a temporary alliance with the CPI for the purpose of calling a nation-wide textile strike. The strike was so disruptive that the British declared the CPI illegal in July 1934. (It was to remain illegal until 1942). With Roy in jail and the CPI illegal, the Royists now affiliated with the new CSP. According to Jayaprakash Narayan, practically the entire membership of the Roy Group had joined the CSP within months of the latter's formation, there being practically no differences between their basic policies at that time.<sup>88</sup> It will be recalled that both the CSP and the Roy Group were organized within the overall framework of the Congress, and this factor must have facilitated their merger. Apparently however, some of the Royists were intent on even more complete identification with Congress, for in 1935 one faction of the Group adopted a new program which called for the liquidation of the CSP as a party and for reformation as merely a left wing of the Congress Party.

The second party conference of the CSP, meeting at Meerut

in January 1936, rejected the proposal that the party dissolve itself. The defeat of this faction of the Roy Group seemed to pave the way for a total amalgamation of the Royists with the CSP. This amalgamation never materialized, however, for in March 1937, Roy, who had been given an early release from prison, led his followers out of the CSP and began a bitter denunciation of the Socialists. Roy apparently agreed with the faction of Royists who wanted to dissolve the CSP for he was moving steadily toward a position of complete support for the Congress and would tolerate no divided allegiances on this matter. Unity between the CSP and the Roy Group thus lasted somewhat less than three years, for most of which time Roy himself was in jail.<sup>89</sup>

Like the short marriage with the Royists, the CSP also worked out a brief alliance with the Bengal Labour Party. A joint co-ordinating board was set up in Bengal with both parties equally represented, but because of the Labour Party's militancy in the labour movement, the CSP dissolved the alliance within months of its formation. After Dutt-Mazumdar was released from prison in 1936, the Labour Party achieved a working arrangement with the then illegal CPI whereby the Labour Party would be the open legal front for the Communists.<sup>90</sup> The CPI, as will be noted below, was at this time following United Front tactics and was seeking alliances with not only other leftist parties but with the Congress Party as well. The Labour Party-CPI cooperative venture lasted only until the general break-up of the United Front during the events surrounding the two elections of Subhas Chandra Bose as Congress President.

By far the most important move for unity among the leftist parties was the United Front of the CPI which came after 1935 when the Comintern ordered Communist parties around the world to shift tactics. After 1928, the Comintern had followed a left-sectarian policy of non-cooperation with bourgeois-nationalist movements. As a consequence of the policy, the CPI had been forced into a position of opposing the 1930 Gandhi-led mass movement and had thus alienated itself from the mainstream of the Indian Nationalist movement.

At the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow in the summer of 1935, this left-sectarian policy was changed to one of support for a United Front

with other nationalist groups even if they were considered bourgeois by Communist standards. Undoubtedly this shift in tactics was motivated by Russia's new perception of the rising menace of fascism and consequently her desire to win as many allies around the world as possible.

The CPI was not represented at the Seventh World Congress and was thus slow to understand the full implications of the new policy. Even after the United Front tactics had been explained to the Indian Communists by the CPGB, they implemented the policy only imperfectly and half-heartedly. It was actually the CSP which supplied the initiative for the United Front. Jayaprakash Narayan, although he had renounced Russian Communism after his student days in the United States, nevertheless was still a Marxist and hoped to unite all Marxist groups in India under the leadership of the CSP. Reflecting on the matter in 1941, he wrote,

from the very beginning the (Congress Socialist) Party desired to bring together all these local and national (Marxist) groups in order to form one united socialist party. As would appear from the present position, the Party largely failed in this endeavour. It failed, however, not because it lacked initiative or spared effort, but because of the sectarianism and disruptiveness of the other parties, particularly of the Communist Party.<sup>91</sup>

Due to his strong desire for cooperation with the Communists in the 1930's, however, Narayan got a resolution passed at the Meerut conference of the CSP in January 1936 which permitted Communists to become members of the CSP. The only conditions were that Communists be admitted on an individual basis and that each application be approved by the national executive of the party. But in practice, Communists were permitted to join without seeking individual permission and without even identifying themselves as Communists.<sup>92</sup>

Even with this open invitation from the Socialists, the CPI was reluctant to take advantage of the opportunity to implement the United Front policy. Many Indian Communists did not like the idea of cooperating with the "bourgeois" Indian National Congress as they were directed to do by the new policy. Nor did they want to cooperate with the CSP, which they considered a "left manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie."<sup>93</sup> In 1935, how-

ever, the Communists elected a new general secretary, P. C. Joshi, to lead the party in implementing the United Front policy. Under Joshi's leadership, the CPI accepted the CSP invitation; and to Narayan at least the prospects for left unity looked bright.<sup>94</sup>

Unfortunately for Narayan, the Communists had a different conception of the United Front. They apparently did not intend to lose their identity as Communists and merge into a new united socialist party as Narayan hoped. By the end of 1936, after little more than a year of cooperation in the United Front, Narayan had become somewhat disillusioned, for he discovered that Communists were disrupting the provincial CSP organizations, trying to convert Socialists to communism, trying to gain control of local CSP units, and competing with the Socialists in the labour movement. Narayan's initial response to these developments was merely to warn the CSP provincial organizations to be cautious of the Communists. However, an intolerable situation developed in August 1937 when an alleged secret Communist document was read at a meeting of the CSP national executive at Patna. According to Narayan, this document asserted that the Communists entered the CSP only as a temporary expedient, that the CPI was the only true socialist party, and that the CPI would never tolerate a rival leftist party.<sup>95</sup> Although the Communists made an attempt to reconcile the split, the Socialists never again placed any faith in cooperation with the CPI. After only two years of attempted cooperation, the two major leftist parties of India parted company. A legacy of bitterness and distrust remained, especially on the part of the Socialists, which effectively prejudiced all future attempts at left unity.

The Bengali terrorists, upon their release from detention in late 1930's, thus found a thoroughly divided leftist movement in India, especially in Bengal. The converted terrorists were themselves divided, ideologically, and on the basis of their former terrorist party allegiance. These divisions persisted even after the converted terrorists decided to reorganize into leftist parties. Thus the British really had little to fear from the combination of terrorism and Marxism when it did occur in the late 1930's.

CHAPTER VI

FORMER TERRORISTS AND LEFTIST POLITICS,

1938—1942

The year 1934 may be taken as the date of the end of the terrorist movement in Bengal. The last successful terrorist act in the province was the murder of the third consecutive district magistrate in Midnapore on September 2, 1933; and the last planned but unsuccessful act was the third attempt on the life of the Bengal Governor, John Anderson, on May 9, 1934. The Civil Disobedience Movement was officially terminated by Congress on May 20, 1934, thus completing the almost perfect contemporaneity of the fourth outbreak of terrorism in Bengal and the second Gandhian mass movement.<sup>1</sup>

RELEASE OF THE DETENUS

Shortly after the ending of the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Government began a gradual release of political prisoners except those convicted of crimes of violence and those under preventive detention for suspected membership in terrorist parties. In part, this release of prisoners was designed to create a favourable atmosphere for the inauguration of new governmental reforms, reminiscent of the release of both political and terrorist prisoners at the time of the 1919 reforms. The Constitution of 1935 received the royal assent on August 4, 1935, but did not go into effect until the spring and summer of 1937 after new elections had been held in India and after the Congress Party had decided to cooperate with the new reformed governmental system. Under the new Constitution, a federation was created with dyarchy at the center and responsible government in the provinces. In the elections to the new provincial legislatures, the Congress Party and its allies won majorities in seven of the eleven provinces. Interim governments were formed in these Congress majority provinces in April while the party high command debated whether to accept office under

the new system. When Congress finally decided in favour of co-operation, the interim governments resigned and new Congress ministries took office in July 1937. One of their first acts was to release all remaining political prisoners held in the provinces under Congress control, including those under detention for suspected activity.

In Bengal, although Congress won more seats than any other party, it did not have enough seats to command a majority. Therefore a coalition ministry was appointed without the participation of Congress. A. K. Fazlul Huq became chief minister, heading a coalition which included the Muslim League, other non-League Muslims and non-Congress Hindus. One of the first tasks of this new Bengal Government was to deal with the terrorists still under detention and with the special legislation pertaining to terrorism. Now completely responsible for the maintenance of law and order, the Bengal Ministry and Legislature significantly did not repeal any of the "repressive" acts, although one law passed in 1932 to deal specifically with the Civil Disobedience Movement was not renewed when its provisions expired in 1938.

On the matter of release of terrorist detenus, the Ministry was in a more awkward position. According to R. Coupland, at the time Huq took office in April 1937, there were 2,304 persons held under detention without trial; and at the beginning of 1938 there were an additional 387 persons in provincial jails who had actually been convicted of various crimes ranging from seditious speech to murder. Of the 2,304 detenus, only 1,152 were still actually in jails and camps, the remainder having been released to village or home confinement.<sup>2</sup> There was considerable pressure on the Huq Ministry for the immediate release of all prisoners, both convicts and detenus. This pressure came from Congressmen throughout India but especially from the Bengal Congress, from such groups as the All-India Student Federation,<sup>3</sup> and from the prisoners themselves. In the summer of 1937, 225 of the 280 convicts in the penal colony in the Andaman Islands began a hunger strike demanding immediate release, and sympathetic hunger strikes quickly followed in jails and camps both in and outside of Bengal.<sup>4</sup>

Generally, those agitating for release of prisoners made no distinction between persons detained without trial and convicted

criminals. The Huq Ministry, however, had to take a more responsible position. The decision in regard to the detenus was made rather quickly. The Home Minister, Nazimuddin, announced in August 1937 a policy of gradual release of all persons held without trial. By August 25, 1938, a little more than a year later, all such detenus had been given their freedom. However, agitation continued for the release of the convicts as well, but the most that Nazimuddin would concede was a release of seriously ill convicts and those (other than murderers) whose sentence were to expire in eighteen months or less. Concerning the remainder, an advisory committee was established to review each individual case, and as a result of this procedure, a few convicts were released.<sup>5</sup>

#### THE CONVERTED TERRORISTS AS LEFTISTS

On two previous occasions, 1919-1920 and 1927-1928, the release of terrorists from detention had resulted in the resumption of revolutionary activity within a very short time. In 1937-1938, however, the release of detenus produced no such result. Terrorism of the type which had characterized the previous three decades in Bengal was dead. The reasons for its demise may be briefly recapitulated. The terrorist parties had been thoroughly split internally ever since 1928 when the younger members of both major parties refused to follow the leadership of the *dadas* and organized their own revolt groups. Furthermore, many of these younger members had adopted Marxism, an ideology which specifically deprecated individual acts of terror and urged instead the organization of the peasants and workers for a coming social revolution. The old terrorist groups under the *dadas* seem to have had no new infusions of recruits to replace the revolted elements, for the younger generation of Bengali students in the 1930's, like the revolt groups, was also attracted to the new leftist ideology. Many of the older *dadas*, having lost the romantic daring of youth, were content simply to bask in the glory of former valiant deeds. Since the mid-1920's, as has been noted, they displayed a marked reluctance to initiate new terrorist actions, and it was for this reason that the younger members had revolted and had eventually become imbued with leftist ideology. Thus the terrorist movement was weak and



divided, split into younger and older generations, the former interested in mass social revolution of the future and the latter interested in individual deeds of the past. Finally, failure after failure in the terrorist movement, coupled with the relative success and prestige of the Congress Party seemed to convince many of the terrorists, the older leaders as well as the younger rank and file, that their interests might be best served by cooperating with Congress, at least as a temporary expedient.

Actually, from the early 1920's both the major terrorist parties had, to some extent, been involved in Congress politics. The converted terrorists must have been aware that virtually all leftist groups in India and Bengal in the late 1930's were already cooperating to some extent with Congress while at the same time pursuing their independent leftist objectives. The CSP had always been organizationally within Congress, M. N. Roy had organized his group within Congress, the Labour Party was cooperating with the CPI which in turn was following a policy of United Front with the CSP and Congress, and Subhas Chandra Bose, long influential among Indian leftists and especially among Jugantar terrorists, was rising to the peak of his influence in Congress politics. As a consequence of one or more of these considerations, the ex-terrorists dissolved their old terrorist parties and affiliated with Congress, either as individuals, or as members of new leftist groups, or as members of existing leftist groups which were already cooperating with Congress.

The Anushilan terrorists, upon their release from detention, found hardly a trace of their old party structure still in existence.<sup>6</sup> The Samiti was thoroughly disrupted and internally divided. Perhaps as many as fifty per cent of the members had converted to Marxism, and it was they who took the initiative in the debate over the future course of action of the party. The only point at issue among these Marxists was whether to join the CPI, the CSP, or to form a new leftist party of their own. The decision was finally made in favour of the Socialists, perhaps through the influence of Acharya Narendra Deva, a founder of the CSP and a long-time sympathizer with the activities of the Samiti.<sup>7</sup>

In the summer of 1938, Tridib Kumar Chaudhury, one of the rising young leaders of the Anushilan Marxists, and Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, one of the old guard who had been asso-

ciated with the HSRA, met with Jayaprakash Narayan, then the general secretary of the CSP, and worked out an agreement whereby the Anushilan Samiti members and some of the HSRA would join the Socialists on a trial basis.<sup>8</sup> The ex-terrorists would keep their old party names,<sup>9</sup> but they would in fact become members of the CSP, which was itself organized within Congress.

According to Tridib Chaudhury, almost the entire membership of the Anushilan Samiti agreed to the decision to join the CSP even though only about half of the membership had actually accepted Marxism. The non-Marxists went along with the merger perhaps out of loyalty to their old terrorist comrades.<sup>10</sup> Certainly some of the *dadas* went along in order to preserve whatever was left of their positions of leadership in the party.<sup>11</sup> In addition, about one-quarter of the membership of the HSRA, including of course Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, also joined the ex-terrorist group within the CSP. Presumably the remainder of the HSRA either joined Congress without commitment to any particular group or dropped out of nationalist politics. In any case the HSRA ceased to function. A spokesman for the group, Sachindra Nath Bakshi, announced in a statement to the press in May 1938 that after considering the tremendous growth of popular support for the Congress and considering that their old terrorist tactics had outgrown their usefulness, the HSRA had decided to dissolve itself.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, Sachindra Nath Sanyal indicated that he had split with his old comrade, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, because in his opinion Chatterjee had become a confirmed Marxist and Sanyal was definitely opposed to "Communist principles based on materialist philosophy."<sup>13</sup> Apparently Sanyal had outgrown his earlier interest in Marxism.

The ex-Jugantar terrorists were for the most part already members of Congress. They had long been supporting Subhas Chandra Bose in Bengal Congress politics. In 1938 the top leadership of the party, after their release from detention, voted to dissolve the separate Jugantar organization while still remaining within Congress.<sup>14</sup> Jadugopal Mukherjee, an old Jugantar *dada* who had been out of terrorist activities since 1928, published an article in September 1938 in Roy's party organ *Independent India*, in which he urged his "friends" (by which

he meant his former colleagues in Jugantar) to join and support Congress in order to accomplish the immediate task of ridding the country of British domination. He advised that no separate party be formed either inside or outside of Congress.<sup>15</sup> Apparently the Jugantar ex-terrorists had no intention of forming a separate party outside of Congress, but it appears that a great debate took place among the Marxist members over whether to associate with the Roy Group within Congress. Jibanlal Chatterjee, a follower of Roy since the early 1920's, reported that after an intense fight within the Jugantar group, almost all the members did agree to support Roy.<sup>16</sup> Amulya Chakraborty, on the other hand, reported that although Jugantar was initially hostile to Roy, eventually some fifty percent of the party came to support him, another twenty-five percent joined the CPI, while the remainder became uncommitted members of Congress.<sup>17</sup> Still a third account is provided by Jadugopal Mukherjee, who insisted that in spite of Roy's efforts to convert the Jugantar members to Marxism, most members remained unimpressed with the new ideology.<sup>18</sup> The most that can be concluded from these conflicting reports is that there was a heated debate among the Jugantar ex-terrorists and some of them did eventually join the Roy Group.<sup>19</sup>

### THE DISUNITY OF THE LEFT

By the end of 1938 then, virtually all terrorists, whether Marxist or not, were members of Congress and most were tending to support one or the other leftist group inside Congress. Smaller numbers of terrorists, on an individual basis, had joined the Labour Party and the Communist League. The opportunity for a grand alliance of all these former revolutionaries, leftists, and other critics of Gandhian leadership was provided by the election of Subhas Chandra Bose as president of the Congress in February 1938, just prior to the Haripura session. Virtually every leftist group as well as a majority of non-leftist Congressmen supported Bose in this election. For a brief year then, the left was consolidated as it never had been before and never would be again.

Two events account for the breakup of this coalition, namely, the opposition of Gandhi to the re-election of Bose in

1939 and the subsequent conflict between the left and Gandhian wings of Congress, and secondly, the outbreak of World War II. The net effect of these two events, particularly the second, was to leave the Bengal ex-terrorists as well as the entire left wing of Congress, more deeply divided than ever. These events in the left wing from the re-election of Bose through the war may be summarized briefly as follows.

Gandhi had reluctantly approved Bose's election as Congress president in 1938. But Bose contested for re-election in January 1939, this time in the face of Gandhi's open opposition. With the support of virtually every left wing group, including all the Bengal ex-terrorists, Bose defeated the Gandhi-picked candidate, Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Gandhi had announced that if Sitaramayya were defeated he would regard it as a personal defeat; and so it was. But Gandhi still had tremendous influence over the affairs of Congress and even the Socialists. G. B. Pant offered a resolution at the Tripuri session in 1939 to the effect that the president, Bose, be required to choose his Working Committee in conformity with the wishes of Gandhi. In the voting, the CSP abstained and the CPI cast in favour of the Pant resolution, thus insuring its passage. Unable to choose his own Working Committee and unable to reach any compromise with Gandhi over the composition of the Working Committee, Bose had very little choice but to resign. The defection of the CSP and the CPI from the left wing supporters of Bose foreshadowed the complete break-up of the leftist coalition. The Socialists and Communists by their actions on the Pant resolution had shown that they were more interested in the unity of Congress under Gandhi's leadership than in the unity of the left under Bose.<sup>20</sup> But Bose's struggle against the Gandhian wing was not over yet.

Immediately after his resignation as Congress president, April 29, 1939, Bose organized the Forward Bloc, which was regarded, and originally may have been intended, to be a loose alliance of the leftist groups within Congress rather than a new political party.<sup>21</sup> Bose desired an immediate renewal of mass civil disobedience as opposed to Gandhi's policy of watchful waiting in the face of the impending international crisis on the eve of World War II. Since the United Front between the CPI and the CSP had ceased to function, Bose felt that there was

need for some common platform on which to rally the leftist elements.<sup>22</sup>

Bose immediately won the support of many former terrorists. Both the Shree Sangha and the Bengal Volunteers joined the Forward Bloc, thus mending the rupture which had kept these two terrorist groups divided since 1928. Furthermore, it appears that many former Jugantar terrorists, other than those who were supporting Roy, also joined the Bloc. Finally, the Forward Bloc attracted the support of a large number of other Marxist and non-Marxist individuals and groups who were generally opposed to Gandhian leadership. These groups included initially the Anushilan terrorists within the CSP, the Labour Party, and the Kisan Sabha (Peasant Association) under the leadership of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati.

It is not clear exactly what Bose had in mind in the formation of the Forward Bloc. It may well have been that he personally wanted to form a separate party, but that he compromised, at least to the extent of calling it a "bloc" rather than a "party," in order to overcome the objections of some of the groups which allied with him. Swami Sahajanand especially was insistent that no new party be formed, since, as he correctly pointed out, the other leftists would regard it only as another party competing with them for membership.<sup>23</sup>

At the first conference of the Forward Bloc, June 22 and 23, 1939, K. F. Nariman, chairman of the reception committee, called for a "formal co-ordination and federation of all the leftist groups in Congress. Furthermore, the rationale for left unity within the Forward Bloc was not to be the advancing of leftist aims as such, but the combatting of what Nariman termed the "authoritarian tendencies" in the Congress leadership, an obvious reference to the way in which Bose had been compelled to resign the presidency of the Congress.<sup>24</sup> At the time of this first conference of the Forward Bloc, the CPI, CSP, Kisan Sabha, Roy Group (now called the League of Radical Congressmen), Labour Party, and the Anushilan group within the CSP, agreed with Bose to form a Left Consolidation Committee.

But the tenuous coalition of leftists in the Consolidation Committee soon broke up under pressure from more moderate elements in Congress. In order to keep the nationalist movement under Gandhi's control, the Congress Working Committee

passed a resolution requiring that any local unit connected with the Congress secure permission from the appropriate Provincial Congress Committee before undertaking civil disobedience demonstrations. Bose, who was ready for immediate resumption of civil disobedience, especially now that Great Britain was on the verge of war in Europe, attempted to get the parties represented in his Left Consolidation Committee to participate in an organized protest against this resolution. When the Working Committee threatened to expel any units of the Congress who participated in such a protest, the Consolidation Committee fell apart. Bose himself was indeed subsequently suspended from Congress. But the Royists were not at this time prepared to split the Congress and immediately quit the Committee. The CSP withdrew later for the same reason. The CPI, compelled by the then current Comintern policy to cooperate with Congress, likewise withdrew. Only the Kisan Sabha, Labour Party, Anushilan group within the CSP, plus Bose's personal following in the Forward Bloc (which included the Shree Sangha and the Bengal Volunteers) continued to support the Left Consolidation Committee. Thus although initially Bose's presidency of Congress had served to unite all leftist groups, his subsequent competition with Gandhi and the Congress moderates had served to open up new divisions.

The failure of the CPI to give continued support to Bose resulted in the Labour Party ending its alliance with the Communists. Since the Labour Party had regarded itself as a legal front for the illegal CPI, now that the coalition had broken up, the Labour Party proceeded to organize its own illegal revolutionary wing, the Bolshevik Party, in the summer of 1939. The former Anushilan terrorists in the CSP were also unhappy with the failure of the Socialists to continue backing Bose, although they did not formally split from the CSP until 1940.

World War II broke out in September 1939, and differences over the proper policy to follow in regard to the war completed the final fragmentation of the left. The policy of Congress remained one of watchful waiting for more than a year after the actual fighting began. The leftist parties formalized their position more quickly. Contemporaneous with the Ramgarh session of Congress in March 1940, Bose and the Forward Bloc, supported by the Kisan Sabha, the Labour Party,

the new Bolshevik Party, and the Anushilan group within the CSP, organized a large meeting known as the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference, which demanded, as its name implied, no compromise with the British on the issues of support for the war effort and complete independence.<sup>25</sup>

In spite of this pressure from Bose and a segment of the left wing, Congress still did not clarify its position on the war at the Ramgarh session. The CSP, however, indicated its willingness to support Gandhi if he started an anti-war movement, and further indicated that it would not initiate any action of its own, independent of Gandhi's leadership. The Anushilan group within the CSP could not tolerate this subservience to Gandhi and hence defected and held a separate meeting at Ramgarh at which the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) formally came into being.<sup>26</sup> Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee became the first general secretary. It is interesting that although the RSP members held virtually the same position in regard to the war as Bose, they did not join the Forward Bloc but rather organized their own separate party. Tridib Chaudhury justified their action on the grounds that at the time there were too many diverse and especially non-Marxist elements with the Forward Bloc with which the RSP did not feel it could associate.<sup>27</sup> An additional factor may have been that the Forward Block was supported mainly by ex-terrorists from Jugantar, Shree Sangha, and the Bengal Volunteers, whereas the RSP members came exclusively from the Anushilan Samiti and the HSRA.

Several months after the Ramgarh session of Congress, the Forward Bloc met in conference at Nagpur and resolved to abandon its posture as an alliance of leftist groups. It formally proclaimed itself a separate party, with the objective of developing a mass following, and calling for "the reconstruction of India's national life on a socialist basis."<sup>28</sup>

The reaction of M. N. Roy to Congress' policy of watch and wait was exactly the opposite of Bose and the RSP. As early as the middle of October 1939, less than two months after the outbreak of war, the League of Radical Congressmen adopted a policy statement which set forth the defeat of Hitler as the immediate task of Indian nationalists :

The present war is not an imperialist war. Nor is it an anti-Fascist war. Yet, if it continues, the immediate

consequence will most probably be the end of Hitlerism, whether the British Government wants that or not. Therefore, it is not permissible for the fighters for democracy and freedom, not only in Europe, but throughout the world, including India, to be indifferent about the outcome of the conflict and its possible developments. Pacifism or dogmatic anti-war propaganda is altogether out of place in the present world situation. No sensible person can talk of freedom and democracy, and at the same time not admit that the fall of Hitlerism and the elimination of the Fascist menace in general will greatly contribute to the triumph of the cause of freedom and democracy.<sup>29</sup>

As the Ramgarh session came and went and Congress still adopted no definite policy in regard to the war, Roy's criticism of Congress became ever more vocal. On the first anniversary of the outbreak of the war, Roy organized anti-fascist demonstrations and proclaimed September 1 as "Anti-Fascist Day."<sup>30</sup>

Activities such as this got Roy into difficulties with the Congress high command, which sought to keep all popular demonstrations under its own control. Roy and other members of the League of Radical Congressmen were expelled from Congress in the fall of 1940. Other followers of Roy resigned. No longer able to function within Congress, Roy organized the Radical Democratic Party among his followers. This new party, now outside of Congress, held its inaugural conference in Bombay on December 21, 1940. The program of the party of course reflected Roy's view that Indian nationalists must support the British war effort in order to bring about the defeat of fascism. Although most of the League of Radical Congressmen followed Roy out of Congress and into the new Radical Democratic Party, a few refused to make the complete break with Congress.<sup>31</sup>

The Radical Democratic Party carried on throughout the war, supporting the British and thus remaining one of the few legal parties. At the same time, because of its position on the war, the Royists incurred the bitter hostility of the Congress, the CSP, and the other small Marxist parties who were opposing the war. Certain internal differences began to appear among the membership of the Radical Democratic Party within months of its founding. Jibanlal Chatterjee, one of the earliest followers of Roy, resigned as early as 1941 over a disagreement with



Roy concerning the organization of the new party. Friends of Chatterjee, largely ex-Jugantar terrorists, remained with Roy for the next two years, but it was becoming evident that the Radical Democrats were internally severely disrupted. Chatterjee's followers came to regard Roy as entirely too pro-British as Roy appeared more and more to believe that Indian independence would come through the democratic processes of the British parliament rather than through Marxist-Leninist revolution. In early 1943, a large block of Radical Democratic members quit the party, and on October 28, 1943, they organized into the Democratic Vanguard under the leadership of Jibanlal Chatterjee. The Democratic Vanguard did not proclaim itself a party. Rather, the group considered itself a "vanguard" which would take the initiative in forming a true party when the time was ripe.<sup>32</sup> The Democratic Vanguard continued to support the war in hopes of turning it into a true anti-fascist struggle, but unlike Roy it placed no faith in winning Indian independence through constitutional processes.

The Indian National Congress finally came to a firm policy decision in regard to the war in October 1940. Since the British would give no satisfactory guarantees regarding Indian independence, Congress would not give its support to the war effort. However, neither would Congress do anything seriously to embarrass the British during the war. Therefore, a moderate program of individual, rather than mass, civil disobedience was inaugurated under Gandhi's leadership.

The CPI was still obligated under United Front tactics to support Congress. But its ideological position was seriously compromised when the Soviet Union signed a pact with Nazi Germany just a week before the war broke out. This pact considerably damaged the prestige of the Communists, but not irreparably so, since for the time being the CPI was still supporting the Indian National Congress. However, the international situation, and consequently the situation of the Communists in India, changed radically in June 1941 when Hitler broke the pact and attacked the Soviet Union. The CPI characterization of the war as "imperialist" was now changed to that of a 'people's war.' The socialist fatherland now had to be defended, and therefore the Indian Communists must support the British in their alliance with the Soviet Union. The consequences of this radical shift

of policy had serious effects on the prospects of the CPI as a political force in the immediate future, for the Communists, as during the Gandhian mass movement in the 1930's, were again following a policy which ran directly counter to the nationalist movement. Communists who had been arrested for opposing the war were released and the party regained its legality for the first time since 1934.

Meanwhile leaders and members of some of the other leftist parties were being arrested for their opposition to the war. Bose was placed under house arrest in October 1940 and though heavily guarded, he effected his escape and fled from India to start his career in league with the Germans and Japanese, which finally culminated with his organization of the Indian National Army designed to invade India and liberate it by force of arms. The Forward Bloc carried on opposition to the war in the absence of its leader.

The peasant leader, Swami Sahajanand, was arrested in 1940 for his anti-war activity, but during the course of his imprisonment he turned to Marxism and accepted the CPI position on the "people's war," and was therefore released in 1942.<sup>33</sup> Sahajanand's defection to the CPI split the top leadership of the Kisan Sabha, and since the Communists were legal and outside of jail during the war, whereas those peasant leaders who opposed the war were imprisoned, the Kisan Sabha fell under Communist control.

Members of the Bolshevik Party were imprisoned in 1941 for their opposition to the war, but like Sahajanand, they too came to accept the "people's war" thesis, broke with their parent organization, the Labour Party, and subsequently were released from jail in 1943.

Thus there came to be four leftist parties, the CPI, Radical Democratic Party, Democratic Vanguard, and Bolshevik Party, which supported the British war effort. On the other hand, the CSP, Forward Bloc, Labour Party, Revolutionary Socialist Party, and Revolutionary Communist Party joined with Congress in opposing the war, and consequently the members of these parties suffered arrest and imprisonment for the duration of the war. The bulk of arrests of the Marxists as well as the Congressmen came in the autumn of 1942. Faced with the presumed threat of an invasion from Japan, the Congress demanded that the

British immediately "Quit India" as the price for Indian resistance to the Japanese. The Quit India demand carried with it the threat of mass civil disobedience. The British responded by declaring Congress illegal, and this action set off a popular explosion, the "Quit India" Movement, which quickly got out of control and resulted in widespread violence and the break down of law and orderly government in the United Provinces, Bihar, Bengal, and elsewhere. Those of the leftist parties of Bengal which were opposing the war temporarily lost their individual identities as they too were caught up in this widespread movement. An estimated 1,000 persons were killed, another 3,000 injured, and more than 60,000 arrested and imprisoned.

The 1942 "Quit India" Movement should not be regarded as a further outbreak of terrorism in Bengal similar to the four outbreaks prior to 1934. The 1942 Movement was spontaneous, unplanned, and undirected. The Bengali terrorists themselves were overwhelmed and submerged in the massive popular participation. It was India-wide in scope rather than confined to Bengal. Thus the "Quit India" Movement was both quantitatively and qualitatively distinct from the four previous outbreaks of genuine terrorism. It was a popular uprising rather than a terrorist outrage.

## CONCLUSIONS

The active terrorists never represented more than a minute fraction of the total population of Bengal. They were drawn from a small segment of the *bhadralok* class which itself accounted for only about four per cent of Bengal society. While it is virtually impossible to calculate accurately the number of persons engaged in terrorism, it would be difficult to believe that there were ever more than 3,000 active members of all Bengal terrorist parties at any one time. If only approximately fifty per cent of these converted to political leftism and if they then divided their strength by joining any one of nine different leftist parties, namely, the CPI, CSP, Forward Bloc, Radical Democratic Party, Democratic Vanguard, Revolutionary Socialist Party, Revolutionary Communist Party, Labour Party, and Bolshevik Party, then the ultimate impact of these converted terrorists on post-independence Bengal politics is indeed minimal. Leftist parties have certainly played an important role in Bengal politics since independence, but the most influential parties have not been those which drew their primary support from the ranks of the converted terrorists.

Presently there are many middle-aged and older Bengalis at the secondary levels of civil, economic, professional, and intellectual leadership in Calcutta who claim to have been either terrorists or leftists or both, but considering the socio-economic background from which they came, they would undoubtedly be in the same positions today had they never been involved in either movement. Practically the only terrorists or leftists who moved into the top levels of Bengal leadership were those who eventually joined Congress. Significant examples are such persons as Niharendu Dutt-Mazumdar, who while in jail between 1942 and 1945 decided to dissolve the Labour Party and to join Congress, and who subsequently became a minister in the post-independence Bengal Government; Bhupati Mazumdar, a Jugantar *dada* who joined Congress about 1938 and likewise subsequently became a minister in the Bengal Government; Lokenath Bal, a Chittagong raider imprisoned in the Andamans who resisted Marxism and did not join the CPI like the majority of

his colleagues, became briefly interested in the Radical Democratic Party, but subsequently became an anti-corruption officer in the Calcutta Corporation and then Deputy Commissioner of the Corporation, a post he held until his death in 1964; Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, secretary general of the Revolutionary Socialist Party from 1940 until 1953, who joined Congress in 1955 and subsequently became a member of parliament in the Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh; and P. C. Ghosh, a former Anushilan member from East Bengal who joined Congress and became the first Chief Minister of West Bengal.

Although the terrorist conversion to leftism may not have been politically significant after independence, it cannot be denied that prior to 1934, terrorism itself did play an important if quite indirect role in the nationalist struggle. The threat of armed revolt was always manifest as long as the terrorist parties remained in existence. This threat definitely had some effect on the policies of both the British and the Indian National Congress. In the face of the terrorist threat, the British had to be certain that they would not lose the support of more moderate Indian nationalists. To this end they yielded to moderate demands in granting the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919, and the Constitution of 1935. These or similar reforms would have come anyway, but undoubtedly they were hastened by the ever-present threat of terrorism lurking in the background. The terrorists did not force these concessions from the British, but they did force the British to be more conciliatory to the non-terrorist nationalists. The reunification of Bengal and the release of political prisoners just prior to new steps in the constitutional process seem also to have been motivated by a desire to create a favourable atmosphere among Indian moderates. Further, the intensity of the terrorist movement in the early 1930's, directed primarily against Europeans, served to generate real fear among some of the British administrators in Bengal and may have contributed somewhat to a breakdown of morale in the services, thus hastening the British to the conclusion that their days in India were indeed numbered.

The dilemma of the Government of India concerning emergency legislation to deal with the terrorist situation has already been adumbrated. The Bengal Government, concerned primarily with the preservation of law and order, always sought to magnify

the threat of terrorism and to seek stronger police powers to deal with the threat. The Delhi Government, however, while appreciating the position of the provincial government, nevertheless was reluctant to grant special powers of trial and arrest in order not to alienate Indian moderate opinion. The terrorist association with the Bengal Provincial Congress Party and especially with the popularly-elected Calcutta Corporation further compounded the dilemma for the British.

The terrorist movement served to influence Congress policy in an increasingly activist and demanding direction. Congress was forced to broaden its appeal to the masses and to begin to put active pressure on the British rather than to rely on petitions and constitutional processes in order not to lose control of the nationalist movement to those who advocated more extreme tactics. For instance, it has been demonstrated that Gandhi called the second mass movement in 1930 in part at least to counteract the new outbreak of terrorism in North India in the late 1920's. The outbreak of mass violence in 1942 suggests that there was always under the surface the danger that Congress could have lost control of the nationalist movement had it not pursued an active policy in the earlier decades. Finally, the series of repressive acts passed by the British to cope with the terrorist movement served as a continual source of irritation to Congress moderates as well as the more extreme nationalists. It will be recalled that the first Gandhi-led mass movement in 1920 developed initially out of a protest against the Rowlatt Act. Also, the Labour Ministry's approval of the 1924 emergency legislation in Bengal served to disillusion Indian moderates in their belief that the Labour Party was sympathetic to the cause of Indian freedom.

The terrorist movement in general, then, had considerable indirect effect on the course of the nationalist movement and on aspects of official policy. However, it could not be said that any specific terrorist party played a crucially influential role. By remaining divided almost from the very beginning into two major and several subsidiary parties, the terrorists themselves determined that no one party would assume a commanding position.

Both Anushilan and Jugantar terrorists held to a similar philosophical position on violence as a means to Indian independence. And even the majority of terrorists who converted to

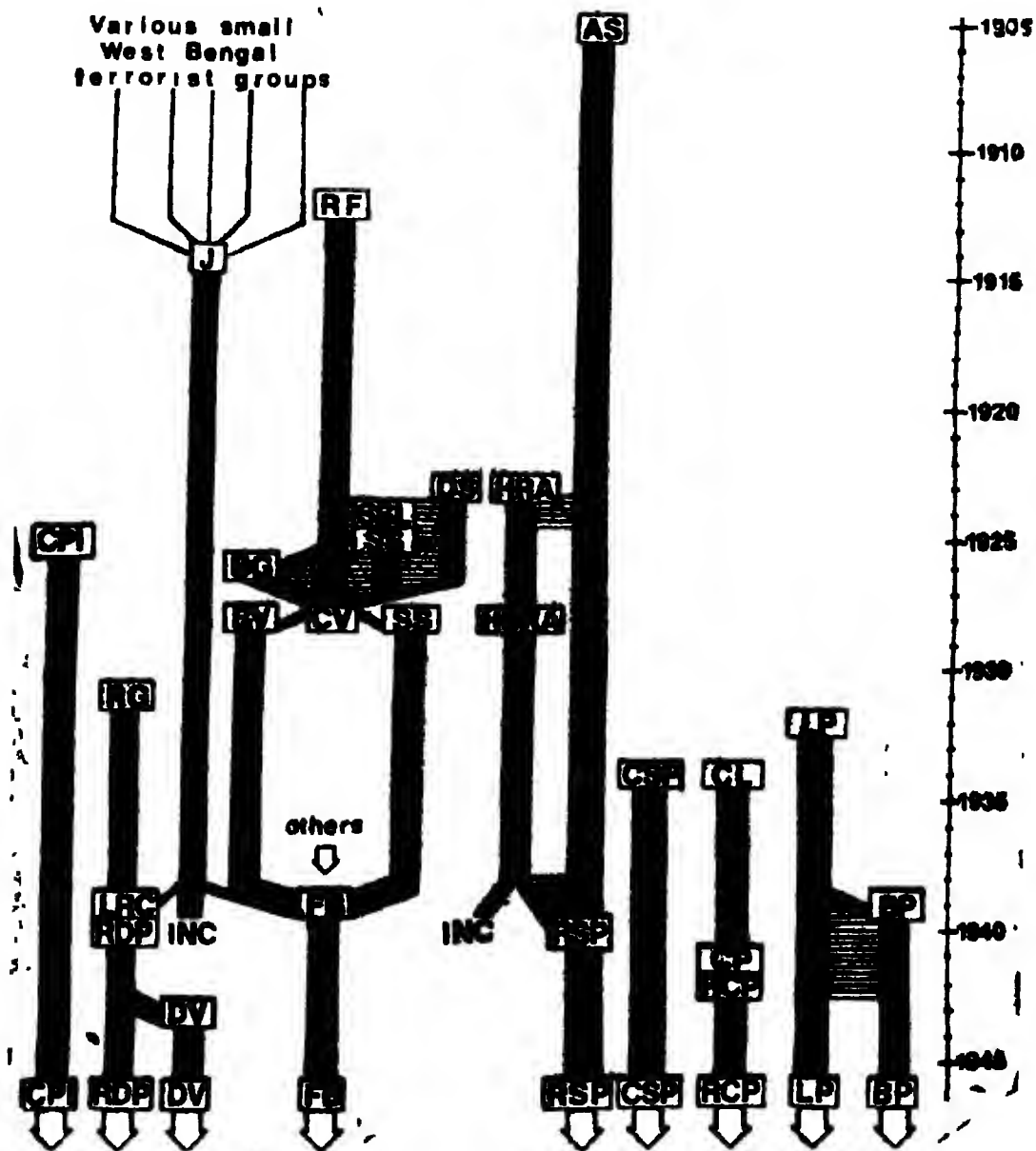
political leftism shared some points of ideological similarity. Yet the persistence of disunity in both the terrorist movement and subsequently in Bengal leftist politics suggests that intellectual commitment to an ideology, either terrorist or leftist, was an insufficient bond of cohesion. Therefore certain factors other than ideology must have been more important to the members of both the terrorist and later the leftist parties. Individual loyalty to a particular leader and to a particular regional subgroup seems to have been one such factor. The relationship of the party rank and file to their *dada* was an intense, personal, almost religious bond of loyalty. Although this relationship broke down to some extent after 1928 when many of the younger members revolted, nevertheless the fact that the groups and subgroups survived relatively intact after this revolt and even after the conversion to leftism indicates the strength and tenacity of the bond. And the fact that many of the *dadas*, even though they did not necessarily convert wholeheartedly to leftism, nevertheless joined various new leftist parties along with the younger converts, indicates the *dadas'* reciprocal loyalty to their groups or at least their desire to retain their old positions of leadership and prestige.

Power, prestige, and the respect of the Bengali community always seem to have been considerations more important than ideology. Terrorism itself provided a new path to prestige in Bengal among youth no longer content to occupy minor positions in the bureaucracy, especially after Bengal leadership in the nationalist movement became increasingly challenged by newly emerging leaders in other parts of the country. As the first generation of terrorists aged and became more interested in past glory than in fresh acts of terror, a new generation of activists arose, who, frustrated by the inaction of the elders, revolted and instituted actions of their own. After their own failure in the early 1930's, having alienated themselves from their old leaders, these younger terrorists turned to political leftism, an ideology which seemed to explain why they had failed in the past, which provided a clear plan for the future, and which they hoped, opened a new political path to prestige. It was a false hope.

## APPENDIX

### DIAGRAM SHOWING THE EVOLUTION OF THE VARIOUS LEFTIST GROUPS IN BENGAL FROM 1905 THROUGH 1945

See the following page for list of abbreviations. The horizontal lines connecting two or more groups indicate a definite organizational connection between those groups. For the sake of simplicity, united front and other temporary cooperative ventures between various groups have not been shown. The thickness of the vertical and diagonal lines is in no way intended to suggest the relative size or importance of the groups.





## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS TO ACCOMPANY THE DIAGRAM**

<b>AS</b>	<b>Anushilan Samiti</b>
<b>BG</b>	<b>Benu Group</b>
<b>BP</b>	<b>Bolshevik Party</b>
<b>BV</b>	<b>Bengal Volunteers</b>
<b>CL</b>	<b>Communist League</b>
<b>CP</b>	<b>Communist Party (S. Tagore)</b>
<b>CPI</b>	<b>Communist Party of India</b>
<b>CSP</b>	<b>Congress Socialist Party</b>
<b>CV</b>	<b>Congress Volunteers</b>
<b>DS</b>	<b>Deepali Sangha</b>
<b>DV</b>	<b>Democratic Vanguard</b>
<b>FB</b>	<b>Forward Bloc</b>
<b>HRA</b>	<b>Hindustan Republican Army</b>
<b>HSRA</b>	<b>Hindustan Socialist Republican Army</b>
<b>INC</b>	<b>Indian National Congress</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>Jugantar</b>
<b>LP</b>	<b>Labour Party</b>
<b>LRC</b>	<b>League of Radical Congressmen</b>
<b>RCP</b>	<b>Revolutionary Communist Party</b>
<b>RDP</b>	<b>Radical Democratic Party</b>
<b>RF</b>	<b>Revolutionary Fraternity</b>
<b>RG</b>	<b>Roy Group</b>
<b>RSP</b>	<b>Revolutionary Socialist Party</b>
<b>SS</b>	<b>Shree Sangha</b>
<b>SSL</b>	<b>Social Service League</b>

## NOTES

### CHAPTER I

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13. "Note by the Secretary of State," Appendix A, p 324
14. Gopal Halder. p. 243.
15. Gordon, *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXVII (February 1968), 211.
16. Satish Chandra Dey, "Atmonnati Boiplovik Samitir Itikatha, [The History of the Revolutionary Organization Atmonnati Samiti], *Masik Basumati*, XLIII (Sraban 1371), 545.
17. Richard L Park, "The Rise of Militant Nationalism in Bengal : A Regional Study of Indian Nationalism" (Unpublished dissertation, Harvard University, 1950), p. 241.
18. Dey, *Masik Basumati*, XLIII (Sraban 1371), 545, 547.
19. Park, p. 244.
20. See below, p. 11.
21. Dey, *Masik Basumati*, XLIII (Sraban 1371), 548-549.
22. Gordon, *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXVII (February 1968), 206
23. The bombing of the Kennedys actually occurred in Bihar, although until 1912 Bihar was administratively a part of Bengal.
24. Gopal Halder, p. 245.

25. *Rowlatt Report*, p. 66.
26. Gordon, *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXVII (February 1968), 209.
27. Giles T Brown, "The Hindu Conspiracy, 1914-1917," *Pacific Historical Review*, XVII (August 1948), 300. Brown based this conclusion on a letter from the former president of Stanford University, Dr Ray Layman Wilbur, dated July 22, 1939
28. Henry D. Baker, American Consul at Bombay, to the Secretary of State, Bombay, August 21, 1914, *Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of India and Burma, 1910-29* (Washington . National Archives Microfilm Publication, 1960), file number 845.00/178
29. Jose de Olivares to the Secretary of State, Madras, May 6. 1915, *ibid*, file number, 845 00/181.
30. It would be interesting to know if Har Dayal or other members of the Indian Independence Committee were ever in contact with Lenin, who was also being sponsored by the German government at this same time
31. *Rowlatt Report*, p 147
32. *Ibid*, p 148.
33. *Ibid*, p. 149
34. *Ibid*. p 155
35. William Roy Smith, *Nationalism and Reform in India* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1938), p. 80.
36. Secretary of State for India Montagu, "Speech Initiating Debate on the East India Revenue Accounts in Commons," May 22, 1919, 116 H. C. Deb 5 s, cols. 628-629.
37. Government of Bengal, "Historical Note on Proposals Made from Time to Time for Dealing with the Terrorist and Revolutionary Movement and its Members in Bengal," March 17, 1932, Home Political, file no. 4/41, 1932.
38. *Rowlatt Report*, p. iii.
39. 116 H. C. Deb. 5 s, col. 632
40. *Ibid.*, col. 623.

## CHAPTER II

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Toward Freedom* (New York : The John Day Co., 1941), pp. 47-48.
2. Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Gandhi's Autobiography : The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Washington [D. C.] . Public Affairs Press, 1948), pp. 558-563.
3. Surendranath Banerjee, *A Nation in Making* (Bombay : Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 278.
4. R. E. A. Ray, Special Superintendent of Police, Intelligence Branch, Criminal Investigation Department, Bengal, "Brief Note on the Alliance of Congress with Terrorism in Bengal," Darjeeling, May 4, 1932, Home Political, file no. 4/21, 1932.

5. Gopal Halder, p. 249.
6. Ray, "Brief Note on the Alliance of Congress with Terrorism in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/21, 1932.
7. "Note by the Secretary of State," p. 326.
8. Among those journals and newspapers cited by the Government of Bengal were the following *Narayan, Sankha, Dhum Ketu, Jugantar, Atma Sakti, Prabartak, Nava Sangha, Bijali, Bangavani, Sarathi, Pravasi, Prabhati, Farun, Mukti Kam,* and *Sonar Bharat*. See letter of L. Birley, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, Darjeeling, May 28, 1925, Home Political, file no. 249, 1925. Note that Birley wrote this letter in 1925 after a series of arrests in the fall of 1924 had brought the open phase of terrorist activity virtually to a halt. Birley was disturbed that, in spite of the arrests, the propaganda articles were continuing.
9. Ibid.
10. "Note by the Secretary of State," pp. 326-327. In addition to the journals and newspapers mentioned above in note 8, the Secretary of State also called attention to articles appearing in the Bengali *Ananda Bazar Patrika*.
11. Birley to the Government of India, May 28, 1925, Home Political, file no. 249, 1925.
12. See below, pp. 30ff.
13. "Note by the Secretary of State," p. 328.
14. Kali Charan Ghosh, *The Roll of Honour* (Calcutta: Vidya Bharati, 1965), p. 375.
15. Memorandum and covering letter from the Bengal Secretariat to H. W. Emerson, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Calcutta, March 17, 1932, "Historical Note on Proposals Made from Time to Time for Dealing with the Terrorist and Revolutionary Movement and Its Members in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/41, 1932.
16. "Note by the Secretary of State," p. 328.
17. Ibid.
18. The Bengal Criminal Investigation Department reported that by 1924, "28 ex-detenus or political ex-convicts were office-bearers of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, and 21 revolutionaries or sympathisers were elected to the All-India Congress Committee." (Ray, "Brief Note on the Alliance of Congress with Terrorism in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/21, 1932).
19. Ibid.
20. Bengal Secretariat, "Historical Note on Proposals Made from Time to Time for Dealing with the Terrorist and Revolutionary Movement and Its Members in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/41, 1932.
21. Banerjea, p. 337.
22. Ray, "Brief Note on the Alliance of Congress with Terrorism in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/21, 1932.
23. Ibid.; also, "Note by the Secretary of State," p. 328.
24. Bengal Secretariat, "Historical Note on Proposals Made from

Time to Time for Dealing with the Terrorist and Revolutionary Movement and Its Members in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/41, 1932.

25. See below, pp. 34-35.

26. Bengal Secretariat, "Historical Note on Proposals Made from Time to Time for Dealing with the Terrorist and Revolutionary Movement and Its Members in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/41, 1932.

27. Ibid

28. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress* (Bombay : Padma Publications, 1935), Vol. I, p. 316.

29. Government of India, *India in 1924-25* (Calcutta : Government of India, Central Publication Branch, 1925), p. 325.

30. Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle, 1920-42* (Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 128-131. Bose was actually arrested under Regulation III of 1818

31 Ibid., p. 106.

32 A Swarajist, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, Chief Minister of West Bengal after independence, defeated Sir Surendranath Banerjea for election in his home constituency.

33 Terrorist propaganda did persist in the Bengali press. See notes 8 and 10 above. Also, the activities of the Hindustan Republican Association resulted in some violence in Bengal after the October 1924 arrests, as will be shown in the following section.

34 "Note by the Secretary of State," p. 321.

35. Interview with Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee. Unless otherwise indicated, all interviews were conducted by the author in Calcutta during 1964-1965. See Bibliography for specific details.

36 H. Williamson, *A Note on Terrorism in India* (except Bengal); (With Notes by Local Government) (Simla : Government of India Press), p. 2 See also Sachindranath Sanyal, *Bandi Jivan* [Life of a Prisoner (in Hindi)], (Delhi : Atma Ram and Sons, 1963).

37. The official name of the party was Hindustan Republican Association. However, it was frequently referred to as the Hindustan Republican Army in obvious imitation of the Irish Republican Army.

38. "Note by the Secretary of State," p. 320. See also Sanyal, pp. 322-328.

39. Memorandum and covering letter from L. Birley to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, Darjeeling, June 6, 1925, "Activities of the Revolutionaries in Bengal from the 1st September 1924 to the 31st March 1925", Home Political file no. 253. 1925.

40. Balshastri Hardas, *Armed Struggle for Freedom* (Poona : Kal Prakashan, 1958), p. 302.

41. Government of Bengal, Political Department, *Memorandum on the History of Terrorism in Bengal, 1905-1933* (Calcutta : Bengal Government Press, 1933), p. 11. This *Memorandum* did not identify the New Violence Party as a branch of the HRA, but it did indicate that the HRA "was in sympathy with the aims of the New Violence Party." (p. 13).

42. Birley to the Secretary to the Government of India, "Activities

of the Revolutionaries in Bengal from the 1st September 1924 to the 31st March 1925," Home Political, file no. 253, 1925.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. The disillusionment of at least one segment of the revolutionaries after the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement and the inauguration of the Swarajya Party was well-expressed, somewhat sarcastically, by Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee. "The Gandhi-ites started ashrams, C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru started the Swarajya Party to carry on grand constitutional activity, and the revolutionaries believed in neither." (Interview with Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee).

46. Surya Sen is identified as Nogendra Sen (not to be confused with Norendra) and also by an alias, "Jhulu," in Intelligence reports of this time.

47. See above, p. 24.

48. See below, pp. 72 ff.

49. For a further discussion of Gupta's activities as Roy's agent in Bengal, see below, pp. 94-95.

50. Birley to the Secretary to the Government of India, "Activities of the Revolutionaries in Bengal from the 1st September 1924 to the 31st March 1925," Home Political, file no. 253, 1925.

51. It must be remembered, however, that Jugantar, unlike Anushilan, was always a rather loose confederation of local units rather than a monolithic organization.

52. Birley to the Secretary to the Government of India, "Activities of the Revolutionaries in Bengal from the 1st September 1924 to the 31st March 1925," Home Political, file no. 253, 1925.

53. Ibid.

54. The program of the HRA as Chatterjee outlined it to the police as well as the resolutions of the UPPC are quoted above, p. 32.

55. "Note by the Secretary of State," p. 329

56. Hardas, p. 301.

57. Birley to the Secretary to the Government of India, "Activities of the Revolutionaries in Bengal from the 1st September 1924 to the 31st March 1925," Home Political, file no. 253, 1925.

58. Hardas, p. 301.

59. Ibid, p. 303.

60. R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India* (Calcutta : Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963), Vol. III, p. 494.

61. Hardas, p. 306.

62. See below pp. 55 ff.

63. Government of Bengal, *Memorandum on the History of Terrorism in Bengal, 1905-1933*, p. 11.

64. See above pp. 32-36

65. From 1877 to 1900 this magazine was called *Nineteenth Century, A monthly Review*; from 1901 to 1950, *Nineteenth Century and After*; and since 1951, *Twentieth Century*.

66. Interview with Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee.

67. Hardas, p. 315.

68. This is the author's opinion, formulated after a lengthy interview with Chatterjee. Chatterjee was released from jail in 1937, was one of the leaders who participated in the merger of the HRA with the Anushilan Samiti and in the organization of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, and was general secretary of this new party until 1953. After the Avadi Resolution of Congress in 1955, Chatterjee joined Congress and held a Rajya Sabha seat from Uttar Pradesh on a Congress ticket.

69. Sanyal, p. 314.

70. Many of the former terrorists interviewed by the author mention *A B C of Communism* as one of the first books they read on Marxism. This was first published in Russian in 1921. Sanyal probably read the English translation by Eden and Cedar Paul (London: The Communist Party of Great Britain, 1922).

71. Sanyal, pp. 314-315 and pp. 318-320.

72. Ibid., pp. 19 and 21.

73. See below, p. 125.

74. See for instance, Government of Bengal, *Memorandum on the History of Terrorism in Bengal, 1905-1933*, pp. 12-13.

75. Sanyal, pp. 331-332.

76. Ibid., pp. 332-333.

### CHAPTER III

1. "Note by the Secretary of State," p. 329.

2. Memorandum and covering letter from L. Birley to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, Darjeeling, June 6, 1925, "Activities of the Revolutionaries in Bengal from the 1st September 1924 to the 31st March 1925," Home Political, file No. 253, 1925.

3. Bengal Secretariat, "Historical Note on Proposals Made from Time to Time for Dealing with the Terrorist and Revolutionary Movement and Its Members in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/41, 1932.

4. Birley to the Secretary to the Government of India, "Activities of the Revolutionaries in Bengal from the 1st September 1924 to the 31st March 1925," Home Political, file no. 253, 1925.

5. Suprakash Roy, *Bharater Baiplobik Sangramer Itihas* [The History of the Revolutionary Struggle in India] (Calcutta: Bharati Book Stall, 1955), Appendix II, pp. 650-652.

6. Bhupendra Kishore Rakshit-roy, *Biplovitirthaea; Binoy, Badal, Dinesh* [Pilgrims of Revolution; Binoy, Badal, Dinesh] (Calcutta: Vina Library, 1953), Appendix, p. 2.

7. Ibid., p. 4.

8. Suprakash Roy, Appendix II, pp. 650-652.

9. Rakshit-Roy, Appendix, p. 4.

10. Interview with Sunil Das.
11. Chhabi Roy, *Banglai Nari Andolon* [The Feminist Movement in Bengal] (Calcutta: National Book Agency. [1947?], p. 111, and letter of Sunil Das to the author, Calcutta, February 2, 1972.
12. Letter of Sunil Das to the author, Calcutta, July 7, 1965.
13. Interview with Sunil Das.
14. Ibid.
15. Rakshit-Roy, Appendix, p. 5.
16. Letter of Sunil Das to the author, Calcutta, July 7, 1965.
17. Interview with Dhiren Mukherji.
18. See above, pp. 25-27.
19. Government of Bengal, *Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1924-25*, (Calcutta The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1926), pp. xi-xii.
20. R. E. A. Ray, Special Superintendent of Police, Intelligence Branch, Criminal Investigation Department, Bengal, "Brief Note on the Alliance of Congress with Terrorism in Bengal," Darjeeling, May 4, 1932, Home Political, file no. 4/21, 1932.
21. It was at this same Serajganj conference that the alliance of terrorists, Muslims, and other Hindu Swarajists passed the resolution praising Gopi Mohan Saha, the assassin of Mr. Day. See above, p. 27.
22. The full text of the Bengal Pact may be found in Dilip Kumar Chatterjee, *C. R. Das and Indian National Movement* (Calcutta: The Post-Graduate Book Mart, 1965), pp. 131-133.
23. Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle, 1920-42* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1964, p. 117.
24. Ray, "Brief Note on the Alliance of Congress with Terrorism in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/21, 1932.
25. Government of Bengal, *Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1925-26* (Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1927), p. xv
26. "Note on the speech made by Mr. Sasmal at the Provincial Conference at Krishnagar, Bengal, on the 22nd May, with special reference to the power of the revolutionary party in Bengal extremist politics," Home Political, file no. 172, 1926.
27. Ray, "Brief Note on the Alliance of Congress with Terrorism in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/21, 1932.
28. Government of Bengal, *Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1925-26*, pp. xv-xvi.
29. Ibid., p. xvi.
30. Ray, "Brief Note on the Alliance of Congress with Terrorism in Bengal," Home Political, file on. 4/21, 1932.
31. Government of Bengal, *Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1925-26*, pp. xvi-xvii.
32. Ray, "Brief Note on the Alliance of Congress with Terrorism in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/21, 1932.



33. Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, *Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1926-27* (Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1928), pp. 2 and 126.

34. Interview with Jadugopal Mukherjee in Ranchi, Bihar. Trailokya Nath Chakraborty, in his memoirs, mentioned that he was in Midnapore Jail briefly from the end of 1924 until the last week of January 1925, but he made no mention of this merger meeting. (*Thirty Years in Prison* (Calcutta: Alpha-Beta Publications, 1963), p. 178).

35. Satish Pakrashi, *Agni Diner Katha* [The Story of Those Burning Days] (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1947), p. 134. Pakrashi later converted to Marxism in the Andamans and joined the Communist Party of India on his release.

36. Narain Bannerji, "Biplober Sandhane" [In Search of Revolution], *Masik Basumati*, XXXVIII (Falgun 1366), 868.

37. Ibid., p. 869.

38. Ibid.

39. Pakrashi, p. 135. Niranjana Sen was a member of the Anushilan Samiti in Barisal. He was interned from 1925 to 1928, but after his release he broke away from old Anushilan Samiti and became one of the leaders of the "revolt" groups springing up in various districts among former members of both parties. The Barisal Independence League could be considered a manifestation of "revolt" group activity. He became a communist while imprisoned in the Andamans during the mid-1930's. (Niranjana Sen, *Bengal's Forgotten Warriors* [Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1945], p. 108). See below for a full discussion of the "revolt" groups pp. 65-68.

40. Bannerji, *Masik Basumati*, XXXVIII (Falgun 1366), 87.

41. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Toward Freedom* (New York: The John Day Co., 1941), p. 132; and Bose, p. 153.

42. See below, p. 54.

43. Bose, p. 153.

44. Michael Brecher, *Nehru; A Political Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 130.

45. Ray, "Brief Note on the Alliance of Congress with Terrorism in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/21, 1932.

46. According to Pakrashi (p. 134), the revolutionaries had resolved to form such a league while still in prison.

47. Again according to Pakrashi (p. 135), the real result of the amalgamation meeting was that the revolutionaries got inside Congress and added the clique-ism of Congress to their own kind of clique-ism.

48. As a matter of fact, Labour did win the elections of 1929, and Ramsay MacDonald became Prime Minister for the second time. It will be recalled that MacDonald was in office the first time in 1924 when the emergency Ordinance in Bengal was promulgated.

49. Quoted in Bose, p. 145.

50. Balshastri Hardas, *Armed Struggle for Freedom* (Poona: Kal Prakashan, 1958), p. 320.

51. Hardas was not a terrorist. And unlike most writers on the revolutionary movement, who are mostly Bengalis, Hardas, a Marathi, devoted most of his book to terrorism outside of Bengal, especially Bombay, the Punjab, and the United Provinces. Having received a classical education in the Hindu shastras and becoming a member first of the Hindu Mahasabha and then of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Hardas was very critical of the tendency of some of the terrorists to convert to socialism or Marxism. (See obituary of Hardas in *Organiser*, August 24, 1968, pp. 16 and 15).

52. See above, p. 33.

53. Hardas, p. 321.

54. Ibid., pp. 329-330.

55. Bose, pp. 156-157.

56. Bannerji, *Masik Basumati*, XXXVIII (Chaitra 1366), 947.

57. Weekly report of the Director, Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department, Government of India, New Delhi, November 22, 1928, Home Political, file 233, 1928.

58. Telegram P. No. 340-C, P. S. V. Viceroy's Camp to the Home Department, New Delhi, December 7, 1928, Home Political, file no. 233, 1928.

59. Telegram P. No. 2765-S, Home Department, New Delhi to P. S. V. Camp, December 10, 1928, Home Political, file no. 233, 1928.

60. Memorandum signed "J. C." and dated December 17, 1928. [Undoubtedly 'J. C.' is J. Crerar, Director of Intelligence Branch of the Home Department.] Home Political, file no. 233, 1928.

61. Bose, p. 162.

62. Bannerji, *Masik Basumati*, XXXVIII (Chaitra 1366). 947.

63. Suprakash Roy, Appendix II, pp. 650-652.

#### CHAPTER IV

1. See below, p. 93.

2. Balshastri Hardas, *Armed Struggle for Freedom* (Poona: Kal Prakashan, 1958), pp. 338-339.

3. Azad and one other important leader of the HSRA, Yashpal, were named as defendants in this case but both managed to elude arrest by the police. Ajoy Kumar Ghosh, later important in the Communist Party of India, was acquitted.

4. See below, p. 85, for an account of the honors accorded Das by the Calcutta Corporation.

5. Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle, 1920-42* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1964), p. 168.

6. Ibid., p. 169.

7. Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, *Report on the*

*Administration of Bengal, 1927-28* (Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1929), pp. 15-16.

8. Suprakash Roy, *Bharater Boiplobik Sangramar Itihas* [The History of the Revolutionary Struggle in India] (Calcutta: Bharati Book Stall, 1955), p. 454.

9. Ibid., pp. 449-450.

10. Ananta Lal Singh in the "Introduction" to Ananda Prasad Gupta, *Chattogram Bidroher Kahini* [The Story of the Chittagong Revolt] (Calcutta: Purabi Publishers, 1928) pp. vi-vii. Singh must have been referring only to murders which occurred in Bengal and Bihar, for other Europeans had been assassinated in other provinces. The three murders Singh referred to were Mrs. Kennedy and her daughter being killed in mistake for Kingsford, and Ernest Day being killed in mistake for Charles Tegart.

11. J. H. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society; Twentieth Century Bengal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 72, n 74

12. Ananta Lal Singh recounted that tales were circulated about one dacoity in which forty men were said to have gone on bicycles to rob a wealthy Indian and had gotten as much as several hundred thousand rupees. Singh himself participated in this particular dacoity and he reported that in fact seven men went on foot and got only five hundred rupees! 'Introduction' to Gupta, *Chattogram Bidroher Kahini*, p. v).

13. Ibid., pp. v-x.

14. Ibid., p. xi.

15. Suprakash Roy, pp. 450-454.

16. Bose, p. 170.

17. Hardas, p. 380.

18. Gandhi to Irwin, Sabarmati, March 2, 1930, quoted in B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress* (Bombay: Padma Publications, 1935), Vol. I, p. 375.

19. For the text of the HSRA pamphlet, see Hardas, pp. 381-389.

20. Bose, p. 169.

21. Ibid., p. 174.

22. Hardas, pp. 390-391; also see above, pp. 62-63.

23. See below, p. 130.

24. The five-year life of the Act ended on March 21, 1930. However, portions of the Act were renewed on April 1, 1930. See below, pp. 76-77.

25. Kali Charan Ghosh, *The Roll of Honour* (Calcutta: Vidya Bharati, 1965), p. 462. The Government contended that the Chittagong Congress was actually under the control of "the Chittagong Jugantar group, one of the most active sections of the new violence party." ("Note by the Secretary of State," p. 330). The phrase, 'new violence

party' as used in this quotation, refers to the 'revolt' groups mentioned above.

26. The Government reported that there were about fifty members in this group alone. 'Note by the Secretary of State' p. 330). Since there were only sixty-two in the entire Indian Republican Army, the Government's report seems to be an exaggeration.

27. Ghosh, pp. 464-466.

28. "Note by the Secretary of State," p. 331.

29. Ibid., p. 332.

30. "Revolutionary crimes in Bengal. Attempts on the life of Sir Charles Tegart. Murder of Mr. Lowman, D.I.G. of Police, Dacca, Judgement passed by the Special Tribunal on the prosecution of Dinesh [sic.] Chandra Majumdar who was arrested in connection with the Dalhousie Square Bomb Case," Home Political, file no. 497, 1930.

31. Majumdar escaped from Midnapore Jail on February 8, 1932. He and about five other absconders were later discovered hiding in a house in French Chandernagore. While attempting to arrest them, the French Commissioner of Police, M. Quim, was shot and killed, March 9, 1933. Only one of the absconders was arrested; the remainder, including Majumdar, escaped. But on May 22, 1933, Majumdar and four others were trapped in a house in Calcutta and taken into custody. Majumdar was sentenced to death and executed, June 9, 1934. (Ghosh, pp. 530-532). Dr Narayan Chandra Ray was sent to the Andamans where, along with many convicts from the Chittagong Raid, he became a Marxist.

32. Narain Bannerji, "Biplober Sandhane" [In Search of Revolution], *Masik Basumati*, XXXIX (Sraban 1367), 633.

33. "Note by the Secretary of State," pp. 332-333; and Bhupendra Kishore Rakshit-Roy, *Biplobtirthae; Binoy, Badal, Dinesh* [Pilgrims of Revolution; Binoy, Badal, Dinesh] (Calcutta: Vina Library, 1953), Appendix, p. 14.

34. Ghosh, pp. 476-478.

35. "Note by the Secretary of State." Annexure II, p. 342.

36. Ibid., Annexure IV, p. 352.

37. Bengal Secretariat, "Historic Note on Proposals Made from Time to Time for Dealing with the Terrorist and Revolutionary Movement and Its Members in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/41, 1932.

38. "Note by the Secretary of State," p. 332.

39. Ibid., pp. 333-334.

40. Bengal Secretariat, "Historical Note on Proposals Made from Time to Time for Dealing with the Terrorist and Revolutionary Movement and Its Members in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/41, 1932.

41. Bannerji, *Masik Basumati*, XXXIX (Sraban 1367), 638.

42. Kali Charan Ghosh, pp. 500-507. For a narrative account of these three assassinations in Midnapore, see Binoy Jiban Ghosh, *Murder of British Magistrates* (Calcutta: Basudhara Prakashani, n.d.).

43. Kali Charan Ghosh, pp. 506-507.
44. "Note by the Secretary of State," p. 335.
45. For the major provisions of this Act, see Kali Charan Ghosh, pp. 632-633.
46. Bengal Secretariat, "Historical Note on Proposals Made from Time to Time for Dealing with the Terrorist and Revolutionary Movement and Its Members in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/41, 1932.
47. Ibid.
48. Kali Charan Ghosh, pp. 479-480. An element of communalism may have been present in this killing. The victim was a Muslim. Ghosh wrote that immediately following the assassination, the "houses of a particular community [Hindus?] were visited by the police in accompaniment with the most notorious ruffians known in the town and the countryside [Muslims?]." A large number of persons were arrested and imprisoned, but there resulted a breakdown of law and order accompanied by looting and destruction of property. This so-called "communal riot" went on unchecked for three days.
49. Bengal Secretariat, "Historical Note on Proposals Made from Time to Time for Dealing with the Terrorist and Revolutionary Movement and Its Members in Bengal," Home Political, file no. 4/41, 1932.
50. For the text of this leaflet, see Kali Charan Ghosh, pp. 609-610.
51. Rakshit-Roy, p. 17.
52. Confidential, Demi-Official letter from H. W. Emerson, Home Secretary, Government of India, to W. S. Hopkyns, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, December 8, 1931, Home Political, file no. 291, 1931.
53. H. Williamson to Home Department (Hon'ble Mr. Emerson), May 4 1932 "Memorandum on the various subjects connected with the terrorist movement in Bengal which might with advantage be discussed with H. E. the Governor in Simla," Home Political, file no. 4/25, 1933.
54. See above, pp. 42-44.
55. Chabi Ray, *Banglai Nari Andolan* [The Feminist Movement in Bengal] (Calcutta: National Book Agency, [1947?]), pp. 97-98.
56. Ibid., pp. 101-102.
57. Rakshit-Roy, p. 17; Kali Charan Ghosh, pp. 509-511.
58. Chabi Ray, p. 102.
59. "Note by the Secretary of State," Annexure II, p. 342. No attempt is made here to recount every terrorist act which occurred during the period. The great majority of terrorist acts were minor robberies or dacoities or unsuccessful attempts at bombing or shooting of minor Indian Government officials.
60. "Note by the Secretary of State," Annexure IV, p. 354.
61. Ibid., p. 335.
62. Kali Charan Ghosh, pp. 514-516.
63. Ibid., p. 523.

64. Ibid., pp. 524-525. One of these two absconders was captured, on March 9, 1933 at Chandernagore on the same occasion that the French Commissioner of Police, Quinn, was killed. See note 31 above.

65. Ibid., pp. 482-483.

66. Ibid., pp. 483-484; and "Note by the Secretary of State," p. 335. Waddadar began her political career with the Shree Sangha, but later lost touch with the Sangha when she became actively associated with the Chittagong group. (Letter of Sunil Das to the author, Calcutta, July 7, 1965).

67. Kali Charan Ghosh, pp. 483-484.

68. Mr. Charles Luke was Superintendent of Rajshahi Central Jail. An unsuccessful attempt was made on his life on November 18, 1932.

69. See note 31 above.

70. "Note by the Secretary of State," p. 336.

71. Ibid., Annexure II, p. 342.

72. Ibid., Annexure IV, p. 352.

73. Ibid., Annexure II, p. 342.

74. Ibid., Annexure IV, p. 352.

75. Kali Charan Ghosh, pp. 536-539.

76. John W. Wheeler-Bennett, *John Anderson* (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 140.

77. Kali Charan Ghosh, pp. 543-546; and Rakshit-Roy, p. 14.

78. "Note by the Secretary of State," Annexure IV, p. 352.

79. Ibid., p. 339.

80. Ibid.

*Terrorism, Civil Disobedience, and the Calcutta Corporation.* (Bengal Government Press, 1933-34).

82. Ibid.

## CHAPTER V

1. Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), p. 43.

2. See above, p. 13.

3. Overstreet and Windmiller, p. 31.

4. Muzaffar Ahmad, *The Communist Party of India and Its Formation Abroad*, (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1962), pp. 58 and

65. In his memoirs, Roy did not give the date of the formation of the party, but he did confirm that it was first founded in Tashkent. (M. N. Roy, *Memoirs* [Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1964], p. 465.

5. M. R. Masani, *The Communist Party of India*, (New York: Macmillan, 1954), p. 24.

6. Usmani was one of the Tashkent émigrés who had succeeded in getting back to India, although his return was without the approval of Roy. He had actually organized a small communist group in the United Provinces by the time of his arrest.

7. Gupta had first come to Moscow as a member of the Chattopadhyay group but had joined sides with Roy when Chattopadhyay failed to win Comintern recognition.

8. Roy's paper was initially called *The Vanguard of Indian Independence*. Under different names this publication continued until 1928.

9. Roy had actually requested the CPGB in August 1922 to send two of their men to India for organizational work. The Berlin Indian Communists were too factionally divided and Roy apparently did not trust any of them. Undoubtedly Roy hoped that the CPGB emissaries would remain under his control.

10. Masani, p. 24.

11. V. V. Balabushevich and A. M. Dyakov, *A Contemporary History of India*, (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1964), p. 158.

12. Ahmad, pp. 153 and 165.

13. [Saumyendranath Tagore], *Historical Development of the Communist Movement in India* [Calcutta]: (Polit Bureau, C. C., Revolutionary Communist Party of India, Red Front Press, 1944), p. 9.

14. See below, pp. 112-113.

15. For a full discussion of this aspect of Roy's career, see Robert C. North and Xenia J. Eudin, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963).

16. *India and Communism*, p. 124.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

18. Overstreet and Windmiller, p. 124.

19. Tagore, p. 20.

20. *India and Communism*, p. 110.

21. Overstreet and Windmiller, pp. 27, 35-36, 41, 54, 62-64, 67, and 69.

22. Satish Pakrashi, *Agni Diner Katha* [The Story of Those Burning Days] (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1947), p. 120.

23. Muzaffar Ahmad insisted that Gupta had not been associated with the terrorist movement prior to his departure from India, or at least he had not been involved in more than a superficial way. However, according to Ahmad, Gupta did have "the requisite qualification for membership of a terrorist party; he knew how explosives were manufactured," and during his first trip back to India, he actually did teach bomb-making to terrorists in Saumyendranath Tagore's home in Calcutta. (Ahmad, pp. 114-115 and 158-161).

24. *India and Communism*, pp. 234-238.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, p. 239

28. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Pakrashi, p. 119.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 130. A *charkka* is a spinning wheel. Since Gandhi

required his followers to spin every day, the expression "spinning the *charkka*" is a figurative way of saying 'following Gandhi.'

32. Ibid., pp. 136-140.

33. Ibid.

34. Narain Bannerji, "Biplober Sandhane" [In Search of Revolution, *Masik Basumati*, XXXIX (Boishak 1367), 120. Bannerji must have been referring either to Sir Cecil Kay's *Communism in India* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1926), or the Government of India, Home Department's *Communism in India, 1924-27* (Calcutta: Government of India Press, 1927).

35. Bannerji, *Masik Basumati*, XXXIX (Bhadro 1367), 955-959.

36. For examples of other terrorists who also became exposed to Marxism in the 1920's, see the section above on the HRA, pp. 57-60.

37. In this study, the terms 'communist' and 'Marxist' as well as 'communism' and 'Marxism' are sometimes used interchangeably. Primarily, however, the term 'communist' is used to denote a person who believes, or is a member of a group which believes (in which case 'Communist' is spelled with a capital 'C'), in the revolutionary overthrow of the existing government and the inauguration of a dictatorship of the proletariat, whereas "Marxist" is used to denote one who merely agrees in general with the system of ideas, especially the economic doctrines, associated with Marx. There are many occasions when it is difficult to know exactly which term is more appropriate. The terrorists themselves did not make a clear distinction between the terms. The term "leftist" is used to refer more generally to all those—communists, Marxists, democratic socialists—who favoured some form of government ownership of the means of production, government planning of the economy, and redistribution of wealth.

38. "Note by the Secretary of State," Appendix A, Annexure IV, p. 352.

39. Interview with Debajyoti Burman.

40. Amal Kumar Mitra, who was associated with a Calcutta branch of the HSRA, reported that Burman got the reputation in jail of cooperating a bit too closely with the British authorities and that the Anushilan leaders sought to win amenities in jail only for their own fellow party members. (Interview with Amal Kumar Mitra). Whether or not Mitra's allegations against Burman are true, his testimony does give clear evidence of jealousy and rivalry between the different terrorist parties even in jail.

41. Bannerji, *Masik Basumati*, XXXIX (Pauch 1367), 622 and 625.

42. E. Finney to C. W. Gwynne, Joint Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, Government of India, Deoli (Rajputana), March 6, 1933, Home Political, file no. 44/126, 1933.

43. "Cancellation of orders against the confiscation of a book entitled "Bolshevism: Theory and Practice" under the Sea Customs Act, Home Political, file no. 35/10, 1933. Curiously the Government did not



identify the author of this book. It may have been Waldemar Gurian's *Bolshevism. "Theory and Practice"*; translated from Russian by E. I. Watkin (London: Macmillan, 1932). If this was the book in question, then the Government should have had no fears about allowing it into India, for it was a strong anti-Communist polemic.

44. Stanley Unwin to the Under Secretary of State for India, London, October 8, 1934, Home Political, file no. 35/12, 1934.

45. R. Peel to M. G. Hallett, Home Department, Government of India, New Delhi, dated London, November 16, 1934, P & J (S) 836/34, Home Political, file no. 35/12, 1934.

46. H. Williamson, Memorandum dated February 4, 1935, Home Political, file no. 35/12, 1934.

47. H. Williamson, Memorandum dated June 20, 1935, Home Political, file no. 35/12, 1934.

48. Khairat Nabi to J. F. Cowgill, Mcerut, September 21, 1931, Home Political, file no. 11/27, 1931.

49. Bannerji, *Masik Basumati*, XXXIX (Ashwin 1367), 1085. Bannerji also wrote that he tried to convert the jail warders to socialism but failed in this effort.

50. H. W. Emerson, Home Secretary, Government of India, "Note on Discussion with the Bengal Government," Home Political, file no. 291, 1931. These are Emerson's notes on a meeting that took place on November 1, 1931, between the Home Secretary and several members of the Government of Bengal in Calcutta.

51. Personal Demi-Official letter from W. O. R. Prentice, Member of Council, Bengal, to the Hon'ble Sir James Crerar, Home Member, Government of India, November 10, 1931, Home Political, file no. 291, 1931.

52. Burman reported that at Berhampore, the daily allowance was Rs. 2 per day. However, the account of Narain Bannerji concerning Presidency Jail differs somewhat. Bannerji indicated that for a long time there was no fixed allowance. The detenus were permitted to requisition whatever they needed. However, by the time Bannerji was sent to Presidency Jail in 1931, the daily allowance had been fixed at Rs. 1, Annas 6, reduced in 1932 to Re. 1. *Masik Basumati*, XXXIX (Ashwin 1367), 1087. Elsewhere, Bannerji indicated that a thirty-member kitchen at the Presidency Jail operated with daily allowance of Rs. 40. This would indicate an allowance of Rs. 1, Annas 4. Lacking confirmation from official sources, the only thing that may be concluded here is that the detenus received somewhere between Re. 1 and Rs. 2 per day. Of course the detenus never actually received either the daily subsistence or the monthly personal allowance. These accounts were kept on paper only. Unused balances could be carried over to the next month. (Interview with Debajyoti Burman).

53. Bannerji, *Masik Basumati*, XXXIX (Paush 1367), 621-622.

54. *Ibid.* (Asvin 1367), p. 1084.

55. Ibid., (Kartik) 1367), p. 111.
56. Ibid., (Paush 1367), pp. 623-624.
57. Ibid., (Magh 1367), pp. 826-827.
58. Ibid., (Falgun 1367), pp. 1053-1054.
59. Ibid., (Paush 1367), p. 622.
60. Interview with Debajyoti Burman.
61. Bannerji, *Musik Basumati*, XXXIX (Magh 1367), 828. Bannerji was released from internment toward the end of 1937 at the same time many other terrorists were being released by the responsible Indian ministries established in the provinces under the Constitution of 1935. CPI or any other leftist group and apparently he never participated. Although he remained ideologically a Marxist, he never joined the again in the nationalist movement.
62. *India and Communism*, pp. 241-242
63. Interviews with Samar Guha, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, Bhupati Majumdar, J. Sinha Ray, Nalini Kishore Guha, Jagudananda Bajpayee, Saumyendranath Tagore, Jibanlal Chatterjee and Amulya Chakraborty. See also Samar Guha, "Introduction" to the second edition of Anil Roy, *Samajtantrir Dristitae Marxbad* [Marxism from the Standpoint of a Socialist], (Calcutta. Aggragami Sanskritic Parishad, 1959), p. iv.
64. "Note by the Secretary of State," pp. 322-323. See also D. Petrie, "Minute on the present situation considered in relation to revolutionary crime and terrorism," Simla, June 19, 1929, Home Political, file no. 133, 1930; and *Midnapore and Terrorism: A Speech of the Commissioner of Burdwan Division* (Alipore: C. R. Battersby at the Bengal Government Press, 1933-34).
65. See the following writings by Anil Roy: *Samajtantrir Dristitae Marxbad* [Marxism from the Standpoint of a Socialist]; second edition (Calcutta Aggragami Sanskritic Parishad, 1959); "Marxian Metaphysics—A Logical Incongruity," *Forward Bloc*, November 23, 1940, pp. 9-10; and "Gandhian Philosophy—A Critique," *Forward Bloc*, October 19, 1940, pp. 8 and 10, continued October 26, 1940, pp. 9-10
66. Masani, p. 44. See also John Patrick Haithcox, "Left Wing Unity and the Indian Nationalist Movement: M. N. Roy and the Congress Socialist Party," *Modern Asian Studies*, III (January 1969), 36.
67. V. B. Karnik, "On Royism," in M. N. Roy, *Our Differences* (Calcutta: Saraswati Library, 1938), p. 164
68. Masani, p. 54.
69. See below, p. 125.
70. Interview with Tridib Kumar Ghosh.
71. Tagore, pp. 29 and 34.
72. Interview with Saumyendranath Tagore, Bijan Datta and Panalal Das Gupta are at least two important early members of the Communist League who started their careers as Anushilan terrorists.
73. Interview with Tridib Kumar Ghosh.
74. Interview with Sudhindranath Kumar.

75. Tagore, pp. 43-44.

76. Ibid., pp. 58-59.

77. Dutt-Mazumdar's experiences may be typical of a large number of Bengalis who now take great pride in the fact that they once belonged to terrorist parties although at the time they joined in their early teens, they did not understand the movement and regarded it as some sort of grand youthful adventure. The author encountered only a few Bengalis who would admit to this, however, Dutt-Mazumdar was one of the most frank. (Interview with Niharendu Dutt-Mazumdar). P. Roy Chaudhury, who joined the Anushilan Samiti in about 1934-1935 and subsequently went into the Revolutionary Socialist Party likewise admitted that his initial association with the terrorists was not motivated by any political consciousness. Rather, joining a terrorist organization "was the thing to do." (Interview with P. Roy Chaudhury).

78. *India and Communism*, p. 248.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid., p. 252.

81. Ibid., p. 253.

82. Interview with Niharendu Dutt-Mazumdar.

83. *India and Communism*, p. 253.

84. Interview with Niharendu Dutt-Mazumdar

85. *India and Communism*, p. 256.

86. The CSP, indeed, included one important leader, Jayaprakash Narayan, who had first become acquainted with Marxism while a student in the United States.

87. Jayaprakash Narayan, *Socialist Unity and the Congress Socialist Party* (Bombay: Congress Socialist Party, 1941), p. 2.

88. Ibid., p. 4. For further carefully documented evidence of the extensive collaboration of the Royists with the CSP, see Haithcox, *Modern Asian Studies*, III (January 1969), 25-30.

89. For a more detailed treatment of Roy's break with the CSP, see Haithcox, *ibid.*, pp. 30-33. Haithcox used materials from the Roy archives in Dehra Dun.

90. Interview with Dutt-Mazumdar.

91. Narayan, p. 4.

92. Ibid., pp. 18-19.

93. Ibid., p. 17.

94. Ibid., pp. 17-18.

95. Ibid., p. 20.

## CHAPTER VI

1. It will be recalled that the fourth outbreak of terrorism in Bengal began with the Chittagong Raid, occurring just thirteen days after Gandhi reached the sea on the Salt March, the event which inaugurated the Civil Disobedience Movement.

2. R. Coupland, *The Indian Problem* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), Vol. III, p. 31.
3. See above, p. 113.
4. The Andaman Penal Colony was used by all provinces and hence all the convicts there were not necessarily Bengali terrorists. It will be recalled, however, that most of the convicts in the Chittagong Raid were sent to the Andamans.
5. Coupland, Vol. II, p. 33.
5. Interview with Jagadananda Bajpayee.
7. Interview with Tridib Kumar Chaudhury.
8. Interview with Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee.
9. This group of Anushilan terrorists within the CSP came to be known as the "Revolutionary Socialist Party," but they did not formally organize into a separate party under this name until 1940. See below, pp. 129-130.
10. Interview with Tridib Kumar Chaudhury. Chaudhury's statement was modified somewhat by one of the non-Marxist Anushilan *dadas*, J. Bajpayee, who reported that only about seventy-five per cent of the membership joined the CSP. (Interview with J. Bajpayee).
11. Ashutosh Kali was at least one *dada* who did not agree to join the Socialists although he himself joined Congress in 1938 and became a supporter of Subhas Chandra. Bose. (Interview with Ashutosh Kali).
12. *Independent India*, May 29, 1938.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Interview with Jibanlal Chatterjee.
15. *Independent India*, September 18, 1938.
16. Interview with Jibanlal Chatterjee.
17. Interview with Amulya Chakraborty.
18. Interview with Jadugopal Mukherjee.
19. The author has been able to identify by name only thirteen former Jugantar terrorists who joined the Roy Group.
20. John Patrick Haithcox, "Left Wing Unity and the Indian Nationalist Movement: M. N. Roy and the Congress Socialist Party," *Modern Asian Students*, III (January 1969), 55.
21. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Unity of India*; second edition (London: Lindsay Drummond, 1942), Appendix "C", p. 425.
22. Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1942* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 332-333.
23. See the correspondence of Sahajanand cited in the author's "The Movement for Left Unity in Indian Politics, 1947-1952" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1963), pp. 45-46.
24. K. F. Nariman, *Speech of the Chairman, Reception Committee. First All India 'Forward Block' "Radical Conference" on 22nd and 23rd June 1939* (Bombay: Rathestar Press, 1939).
25. Bose, p. 343.

26. Tridib Kumar Chaudhury, *RSP Katha; Samajvader Ruparekha* [A Discussion of the RSP; An Outline of Socialism] (Calcutta: Lokatya Sahitya Chakra, 1961), pp. 19-21.

27. Interview with Tridib Kumar Chaudhury.  
quoted in Anil Roy, *What Netaji Stands For* (Calcutta: Sunil Das,

28. Resolution of the All-India Forward Bloc, Nagpur, June 1940, [1948]), p. 3.

29. "'India and War' Thesis adopted by the Radicals in the middle of October 1939," in M. N. Roy and others, *India and War* (Lucknow: Radical Democratic Party, 1942), Part I, p. 52. Virtually every article and speech of Roy reprinted in this volume expresses essentially the same view.

30. "Anti-Fascist Mass Movement; Appeal for Observance of First War Anniversary." (August 17, 1940), *ibid.*, Part II, p. 177-181.

31. Interview with Sudhir Mukhoty.

32. *Revolution Marches On: (Being the Proceedings of the Second Session of the Conference of Democratic Vanguards held on the 19th and 20th of September 1944 in Calcutta)*. (Calcutta: Santosh Kr. Batabyal, [1944]).

33. There is some evidence that Sahajanand had come to accept the "people's war" idea even before the CPI changed its official line. See Walter Hauser, "The Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha, 1929-1942: A Study of an Indian Peasant Movement," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1961), p. 150.

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*Interviews with Terrorists and Members of Leftist Groups*

(The notations following each name indicate the dates on which the interviews were conducted. All took place in Calcutta unless otherwise indicated. The abbreviations following each entry indicate in chronological sequence the various terrorist and political groups with which the person interviewed was associated. For instance, SUC—Socialist Unity Centre, WPI—Workers Party of India. The remaining abbreviations are explained in the list accompanying the diagram in the Appendix, p. 140.

1. Bajpayee, J. December 2, 1964, AS.
2. Basu, Robi. June 23, 1965. SUC
3. Batabyal, Santosh. May 17, 1965. RG-DV
4. Bhattacharjya, Jyoti. May 17 and 19, 1965. RG-DV-WPI
5. Bose, Samar. May 17, 1965. Jug-DV-WPI
6. Burman, Debajyoti. August 31, 1964. AS
7. Chakraborty, Amulya. April 2 and 3, 1965, in Benares.  
Jug.-RG
8. Chaudhury, Tridib Kumar. June 10, 1965. AS-RSP
9. Chatterjee, Gautam. May 20, 1965 CPI
10. Chatterjee, Jibanlal. May 17 and 19, 1965. Jug-RG-DV-WPI
11. Chatterjee, Sunil. March 9, 1965. Jug.-CPI
12. Chatterjee, Simanta Narayan. September 12, 1964. CPI

13. Chatterji, Jogesh Chandra. September 12, 1964.  
AS-HRA-HSRA-RSP-INC
14. Chatterji, Sitansu. June 21, 1965. RG
15. Das, Nikhil. June 24, 1965. RSP
16. Das, Sunil. February 16, 1965. SS-FB-CSP
17. Das Gupta, Pannalal. September 10 and 14, 1964. AS-RCP
18. De, Ramen. May 30, 1965. BV-FB-BV
19. Dubey, Biswanath. June 23, 1965. LP-BPI
20. Dutt-Mazumdar, Niharendu. May 29 and 30 and June 13,  
1965. LP-INC
21. Ghosh, Kali Charan. November 11 and 13, 1964. Jug.
22. Ghosh, Sibabrata. November 11, and 13, 1964. SRP
23. Ghosh, Tridib Kumar. August 28 and September 3 and 5  
1964. RCP-CPI
24. Guha, Mani. June 7, 1965. Jug.-CPI [ This interview was  
conducted for the author by Tridib Kumar Ghosh ].
25. Guha, Nalini Kishore. December 2, 1964 AS
26. Guha, Samar. September 2 and 9, 1964. BV-FB
27. Kalee, Asutosh. September 17, 1964. AS
28. Kumar, Sudhindranath. October 23, 1954. RCP
29. Mazumdar, Bhupati. September 16, 1964. Jug.
30. Mitra, Amal Kumar, November 24, 1964. HSRA
31. Mitra, Tarun. May 21, 1965 FB
32. Mukherjee, Hemendra Behari. May 17 and 19, 1965.  
Jug -RG-DV-WPI
33. Mukherjee, Jadugopal. December 30, 1964 in Ranchi and  
January 29, 1965 in Calcutta. Jug.
34. Mukherji, Dhiren. September 9 and October 2 and 3, 1964.  
BV-FB
35. Mukhoty, Sudhir. May 17 and 19, 1965. Jug-RG-DV-WPI
36. Ray, Charu Chanda. November 14, 1964. As
37. Ray, J. Sinha. October 7 and 20 and December 2, 1964.  
AS-RSP
38. Roy, Bachu, September 17, 1964. AS-RSP
39. Roy, Samaren. June 20, 1965. RG-LRC-RDP
40. Roy, Satish. September 16, 1964. AS-RSP
41. Roy-Chaudhury, P. September 16, 1964. AS-RSP
42. Tagore, Saumyendranath. June 12, 1965. CPI-CL-CP-RCP

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